Commentary

VOLUME EIGHTY-FOUR • NUMBER FOUR • OCTOBER 1987

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L. GORDON CROVITZ

Resurrecting the New Left
SCOTT McCONNELL

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Books in Review: Jeffrey Hart / George Russell / Erich Isaac / Richard Brookhiser / David Bar-Illan

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Letters from Readers

The Constitution

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Robert A. Goldwin's article, "Why Blacks, Women & Jews Are Not Mentioned in the Constitution" [May], is, quite simply, a gem. In this bicentennial year, it contributes richly to our understanding of what the Framers had in mind, and why they adopted that remarkable document in its original form.

There is one point made by Mr. Goldwin, however, in which he seems to be in error. Speaking of the time of the Constitutional Convention, he writes, "New York discriminated against Catholics but was the only state in which Jews could hold office." He does not mention either Rhode Island or Virginia.

In Rhode Island (the powerful influence of Roger Williams notwithstanding), laws were enacted in 1663, 1719, and 1730 that restricted both citizenship and eligibility to hold public office to Protestants. These laws, however, aimed primarily at Catholics, were repealed in 1783.

In Virginia, Thomas Jefferson's Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom, which was finally adopted in 1786 after fierce opposition, not only disestablished the Anglican Church but also ended all forms of official support or penalty for any religious beliefs in that state. The pertinent language from that statute reads as follows:

> That our civil rights have no dependence on our religious opinions, any more than our opinions in physics or geometry; that therefore the proscribing any citizen as unworthy the public confidence by laying upon him an incapacity of being called to offices of trust and emolument, unless he profess or renounce this or that religious opinion, is depriving him injuriously of those privileges and advantages to which, in common with his fellow citizens, he has a natural right; . . . all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinions in matters of religion, and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge, or affect their civil capacities.

It would appear, therefore, that in 1787 there was no legal barrier to Jews holding public office in either Rhode Island or in Virginia.

SAMUEL RABINOVE
Legal Director
American Jewish Committee
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Although I agree with many of the sentiments expressed by Robert A. Goldwin, I find that he not only grossly understates the extent to which the 1787 Constitution legitimized slavery and racism, but also sadly understates its power to deal with both. Actually, the Constitution is a better document than both Mr. Goldwin and Justice Thurgood Marshall think.

The plenary power of the Congress "To regulate commerce . . . among the several States" enabled it to tamper with, even eliminate, the institution of slavery "among" or within the states. This is the reason Madison, Jefferson, and other slave protectors downgraded Congress's power to regulate commerce "among the several States" to interstate commerce. They also projected a states'-rights gloss on the Constitution, as if the federalists or nationalists had not won the 1787 constitutional struggle. The Founding Fathers created a commercial or mercantile republic, not a popular democracy.

Mr. Goldwin tries to sanitize the Constitution with a clever rhetorical device. He repeatedly refers to the "three-fifths clause" as if it did not refer to slaves. Conveniently dropping the "three-fifths" which symbolically, metaphorically, and significantly devalued or dehumanized blacks, he deceptively declares that "nowhere in [the Constitution] are slaves called anything but 'persons.'" The motive of the "three-fifths-of-all-other-persons" provision in the original Constitution may not have been unequivocally racist, but its meaning, operation, effect, and legacy unquestionably have been.

KENNETH S. TOLLETT
Howard University
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Robert A. Goldwin's perceptive article on the "unspoken principles" of the Constitution argues that in a rule-of-law system, in which all citizens have effective

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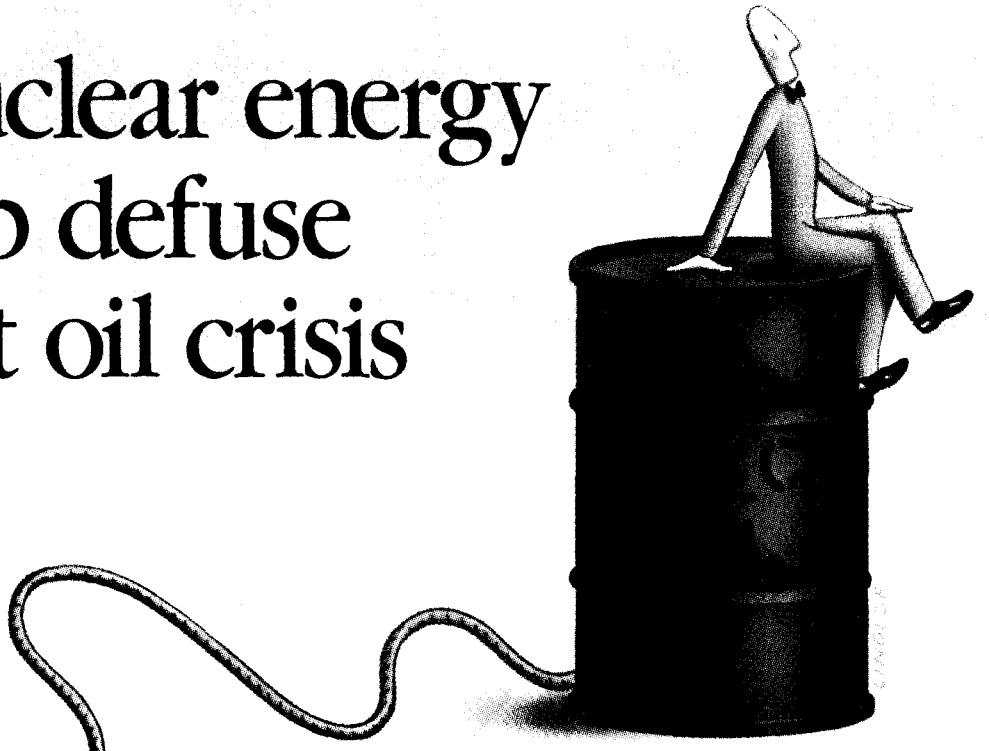
How nuclear energy can help defuse the next oil crisis



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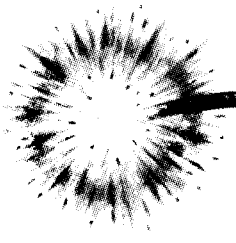

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formal equality, "it is not only unnecessary but inconsistent and harmful" to give constitutional recognition to such subcategories as race, sex, religion, or national origin. He leaves to the reader's imagination the criteria for introducing such categories outside the Constitution.

It may be of some interest in this bicentennial and pre-election year to observe how the two major political parties reflect the spirit of constitutional silence in their own inner constitutions, their party rules.

Both national party rules now have explicit language prohibiting quotas. They take this with a grain of chivalry, however, and reserve equal places for both sexes (at all levels among the Democrats, an equal number of National Committeemen and National Committeewomen on the Republican National Committee).

Elsewhere, they have been moving in opposite directions, in ways not known to the general public.

The Democrats, after winning Supreme Court approval for their 1972 use of racial quotas, in 1978, in response to internal criticisms, forbade them. After the 1984 election, smarting from GOP charges that they were a "party of special interests," the Democratic National Committee withdrew from their rules official recognition of caucuses based on race, ethnicity, region, and sexual preference. The direction of the Democrats' movement is thus from a hyphenated view of citizenship toward Mr. Goldwin's view of the Constitution.

Unbeknownst to most Republicans, meanwhile, the GOP rules-makers have been marching to a different drummer. The Republican National Committee (RNC) has since 1976 introduced nonvoting auxiliary seats set aside for blacks, Hispanics, "heritage groups" (mostly Asian and non-Northern European whites), labor, and, as recently as 1984, a special appointive seat on the (purely advisory) executive committee for a "representative of Jewish-Americans," the only religious group so recognized and hyphenated. The RNC has also made regional caucuses, from which the auxiliaries are excluded, the mandatory basis of party organization between conventions.

Thus, though under the Constitution it still remains possible to be a citizen of these United States plain and simple, in the GOP one can be distinguished, in accordance with categories now acceptable in the party rules, as, for example, a Midwestern, Jewish-American, labor Republican of Austro-Hungarian heritage, but not (as yet) as a Catholic-American gay dentist Republican of Swiss heritage.

A special RNC Committee on Participation is now meeting to consider how these arrangements can be fine-tuned for 1988 (e.g., whether the minority auxiliaries should be given full voting privileges). A full-dress staff report given to the national press in 1986 in preparation for these deliberations declined to question the official status of minority auxiliaries and even defended the National Origins Immigration Quota of 1924 as a nondiscriminatory, GOP-sponsored, pro-labor device.

The preamble to the rules of the Republican party inveighs against "favoritism" of any kind. Mr. Goldwin's article suggests a pointed question: when a group is singled out for special representative status in a rule-of-law regime, who is being favored, members of the designated group or all those citizens on whom the rules are silent?

JOSIAH LEE AUSPITZ
Somerville, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Robert A. Goldwin denies that in any just sense the Constitution of 1787 can be said to discriminate against the rights of blacks, Jews, or women. His argument is that

> the unspoken principles—at least unspoken in the Constitution—are that rights are inherent in individuals, not in the groups they belong to; that we are all equals as human beings. . . . These principles, all stemming from the primacy of individual rights, are the unmentioned foundation of the Constitution. . . .

I agree thoroughly with Mr. Goldwin as to the merits of the Constitution of 1787. But I do not think that conclusion can be sustained by the argument he has advanced. It certainly cannot be sustained by asserting—without any argument or attempted proof—that what is both "unspoken" and "unmentioned" is nonetheless the most vital element in the Constitution.

Elsewhere Mr. Goldwin declares that "the principles of the Declaration of Independence . . . are the bedrock foundation of the Constitution." But what is Mr. Goldwin's evidence for the truth of this assertion? And what does he mean by "bedrock"? Does it mean that the "republican form of government" guaranteed to every state in Article IV—but nowhere defined in the Constitution—is in fact defined by the principles of the Declaration? If so, what is his evidence for such an assertion?

The principles of the Declaration, Mr. Goldwin says, include "the primacy of the rights of individuals [and] their equality with respect to their rights." But why is this primacy authoritative? According to the Declaration it follows from "the laws of nature and of nature's God." The rights are moreover said to be "unalienable" because mankind has been "endowed" with them by our "Creator." The primacy of individual rights in the Declaration is inseparable from its theology. Will Mr. Goldwin undertake to defend that theology?

I doubt seriously that any present member of the Supreme Court of the United States recognizes the authority Mr. Goldwin ascribes to the Declaration of Independence. Certainly Chief Justice Rehnquist does not. Here is what he says in his celebrated lecture on "The Notion of a Living Constitution":

> If . . . a society adopts a constitution and incorporates in that constitution safeguards for individual liberty, these safeguards do take on a generalized moral rightness or goodness. They assume a general social acceptance neither because of any intrinsic worth nor because of any unique origins in someone's idea of natural justice but instead simply because they have been incorporated in a constitution by the people.

One cannot imagine a more forthright or unequivocal statement of legal positivism. Nor can one imagine a more forthright rejection of the authority of the principles of the Declaration of Independence.

Mr. Goldwin must find better arguments than any he has hitherto brought forth, if he wishes to persuade the Chief Justice. And he must deal more forthrightly with the pro-slavery clauses of the 1787 Constitution itself. The only clause to which he addresses himself is the three-fifths clause of Article I. But the most egregious presence of slavery in the Constitution is in Article IV, the clause requiring the rendition of fugitive slaves:

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> No person held to service or labor in one State, under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in consequence of any law or regulation therein, be discharged from such service or labor, but shall be delivered up on claim of the party to whom such service or labor may be due.

By this clause, the government of the United States undertakes to enforce the laws of the slave states, as the agent of the slave states. It is a pledge to preserve slavery in the states that choose to have it, for as long as they choose to have it. And notwithstanding the fact that the slaves are called "persons" here, the law of their enslavement simultaneously regarded them as chattels. As chattels they were held as property, and bought and sold. But as persons they were responsible for their actions under the criminal law. By definition, a chattel cannot have a rational will. By definition, a person cannot be a chattel. Yet under the laws recognized by the Constitution a Negro slave was both a person and a chattel. This schizophrenia cannot be ignored.

But the greatest of all the difficulties for Mr. Goldwin's argument is this: that the same Article IV which commits the United States to perpetuating slavery, by catching and returning all who attempted to flee from it, also guarantees "to every state . . . a republican form of government." There is not a word to suggest that catching slaves and returning them to slavery, and guaranteeing republicanism, are in any way incompatible. Here then is where the heaviest burden of proof lies upon the defenders of the Constitution. Mr. Goldwin has not yet made even a beginning.

HARRY V. JAFFA
Claremont, California

ROBERT A. GOLDWIN writes:

The information Samuel Rabinove provides is a welcome addition to what I wrote about religious tests in the states generally at the time of the writing of the Constitution. He confirms that in Rhode Island and Virginia, too, there was a history of religious tests as a barrier to holding office, although Jews were usually not the main target. Mr. Rabinove does not say whether any Jew actually held public office in these states at that time, but in any case there is no reason to doubt the accuracy of the information he provides and I am glad to know that in 1787 New York was not the only state in which there was no legal barrier to Jewish officeholders.

Kenneth S. Tollett makes two points; one has some merit, the second has none, and the two together are contradictory.

Mr. Tollett says that the commerce clause gave Congress power to regulate or "even eliminate" slavery. I tend to agree that it gave power to abolish the slave trade, foreign and domestic, especially if the power to regulate commerce is considered in combination with powers to make regulations respecting the territory belonging to the United States and to prohibit (after 1808) the migration or importation of slaves. But former delegates to the Constitutional Convention disagreed on the meaning of the key words and phrases in these provisions; Congress, consequently, never used the commerce power with re-

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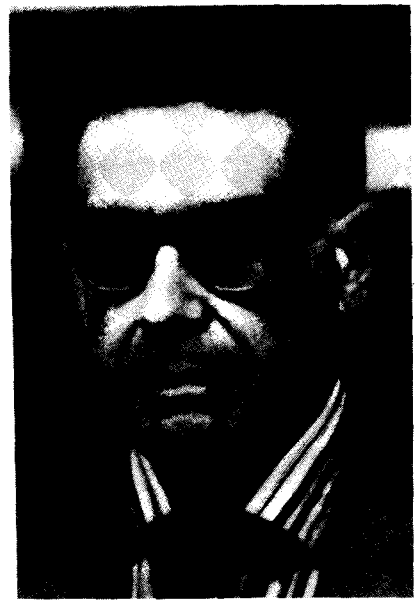

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gard to slavery. In any case, if Mr. Tollett thinks that the Founders gave Congress powers to abolish slavery, how can he also argue that "the 1787 Constitution legitimized slavery"?

On his second point, about racism and the "three-fifths clause," Mr. Tollett is just plain wrong. He says I spoke of that clause "as if it did not refer to slaves." But in fact I connected it to slavery throughout the article. The very first time I mentioned it I spoke of "the most misunderstood constitutional provision relating to black slavery, the famous 'three-fifths clause.' "

What I did say is that the three-fifths clause does not refer to *race*. The usual criticism is that the clause shows that the Founders thought of blacks as "three-fifths of a human being," and I showed that it has nothing whatsoever to do with what the Founders thought of blacks as human beings. If Mr. Tollett and I had been delegates, we would both have voted not to count slaves at all for purposes of representation, to reduce the slave-state power in Congress. Neither of us would have meant that blacks don't count as human beings.

Mr. Tollett does no more than reassert the fallacious reading without evidence or argument. All I can offer to those who cling to the claim of racism in the original Constitution is direct advice: "Give it up. It's wrong and you don't need it." Advocates of a society free of racism would be in a far stronger position if they would acknowledge, along with Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln, that there is no racism in the Constitution, and never was, and use that fact to advantage in the continuing struggle to make American society as good as the Constitution.

Josiah Lee Auspitz shows by his examples the ludicrous possibilities when racial, religious, and ethnic distinctions begin to be made in American politics, even when the objective is to have political parties that exclude no one. But he also shows, I think, how powerful is the formative influence of the Constitution on our thinking because we are able, quite promptly, to see the folly of rules such as he describes even as we adopt them to "remedy injustices." The lesson I draw from his examples is that, where there is injustice, we need to devise remedies that are themselves consistent with the principles of the Constitution.

Harry V. Jaffa says "I agree thoroughly with Mr. Goldwin" as to the merits of the 1787 Constitution, specifically that it cannot be said "in any just sense . . . to discriminate against the rights of blacks, Jews, or women." Since that was my major thesis, readers may be puzzled by the harshly critical character of the rest of his letter.

In regard to my general point that the Declaration of Independence is "the bedrock foundation of the Constitution," Mr. Jaffa is disappointed that I did not provide argument or proof that would persuade the Chief Justice of the United States to abandon his "legal positivism."

It did not occur to me that that was my mission. I addressed the article to the thoughtful citizen who is concerned about what kind of nation we live in and what kind of heritage has been bequeathed to us, in order to know how best to sustain what is right and correct what is wrong.

I addressed directly three widely accepted criticisms that damage the reputation of the authors of the Constitution and diminish the righteousness of Americans in their own eyes. I wrote the article because I thought these criticisms were unfounded and needed correction.

The argument is, I think, clear enough, but if so perceptive a reader as Mr. Jaffa missed it, others might have too. I offered a demonstration of how to read the original Constitution on three of the many subjects it does not mention —blacks, women, and Jews—and drew lessons from the Constitution's silence about these and the many other groups that make up the very diverse population of the nation.

No groups, only human beings as individuals, have constitutional status. The rights, privileges, and protections the Constitution affords belong to each of us as person or citizen, without regard to sex, race, religion, national origin, or any group affiliation. The clear principle, then, although unmentioned in the Constitution itself, is that we are all equal in the politically relevant respect, that is, equal in our rights, the same equality that is proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence.

This may not be considered "proof" by Mr. Jaffa, but I suggest to him that he reread Aristotle on the difference between mathematics and politics, and the folly of demanding proof in political matters. Mr. Jaffa writes more, and more frequently, than I do on the relationship between the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. I will be watching, as his letters to the editor (his chief output these days) appear, to see what effect they have on the legal positivism of the Chief Justice. I gladly bequeath that task to Mr. Jaffa and look forward to a successful outcome.

Mr. Jaffa says that the primacy of the rights in the Declaration

> follows from "the laws of nature and of nature's God." The rights are moreover said to be "unalienable" because mankind has been "endowed" with them by our "Creator." The primacy of individual rights in the Declaration is inseparable from its theology. Will Mr. Goldwin undertake to defend that theology?

Mr. Jaffa commits several errors just in posing this question. First, "the laws of nature and of nature's God," in the first sentence of the Declaration, are not linked to individual rights at all, but to "the separate and equal station" the American people are entitled "to assume among the powers of the earth." Second, "nature's God" is not the biblical God. Third, Jefferson himself could tell Mr. Jaffa that individual rights and the Declaration's "theology" are separable. Carl Becker's study of the successive drafts of the Declaration showed that Jefferson's original draft, in which the argument for the primacy of rights was complete, did not include any of the phrases Mr. Jaffa has in mind. "Endowed by their Creator," "appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world," and "with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence" were all added in subsequent drafts, either in the Committee of Five or by Congress. I conclude that Jefferson did not think the primacy of rights in the Declaration "is inseparable from its theology."

But Mr. Jaffa asks more: "Will Mr. Goldwin undertake to defend that theology?" I will not respond to that question on demand. In my copy of the Constitution of the Republic of Letters there is a clause prohibiting theological tests. I have written on the subject elsewhere, but there is a duty to remain silent when the Inquisitor asks the question. Let this suffice as an indication of my response: nowhere in

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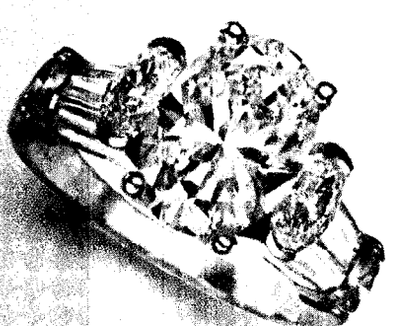

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the Hebrew Bible or the New Testament is there any mention of rights.

The most serious point in Mr. Jaffa's letter is that I did not deal forthrightly with the pro-slavery clauses of the original Constitution. He contends that the Constitution treats the slaves simultaneously as both persons and property; this is, he thinks, schizophrenic, and, he says, "This schizophrenia cannot be ignored."

But Mr. Jaffa can say I ignore this problem only by quoting me misleadingly, in this fashion: "the principles of the Declaration of Independence . . . are the bedrock foundation of the Constitution." But if he had quoted the first part of the same sentence, and the full sentence that followed immediately, his complaint that I ignored the matter would have been seen immediately to be groundless. I said that Southern delegates made acceptance of slavery the price of union:

> But slavery was a flat contradiction of the principles of the Declaration of Independence, the principles that are the bedrock foundation of the Constitution. . . . Almost all the delegates were fully aware that slavery profoundly contradicted these principles and therefore had no proper place in the Constitution.

I say "contradiction," Mr. Jaffa says "schizophrenia." The difference is more than his adoption or my avoidance of pop psychiatry. Contradiction is the more apt word. The anti-slavery delegates knew very well what they were doing. The records of the debates show that they were consciously making distasteful compromises that involved a profound contradiction; they knew at least as well as Mr. Jaffa that "by definition, a person cannot be a chattel." They not only knew it, they said it in debate. But they thought union was worth the price and that achieving "this Constitution" was the best hope for freedom for all, including eventually the American slaves. It was a carefully considered compromise, a deliberate acceptance of contradiction, not schizophrenia at all.

Mr. Jaffa's "schizophrenia" is worse than pop psychiatry, it is flat-out wrong and wrongheaded. Calling it schizophrenia conceals the real meaning of the struggle in the Convention for someone like Madison, principled and prudent, wanting not to endorse slavery and also wanting union. It is easy for someone without political experience and prudence to stand firmly on principle against compromise; but the person with political responsibility must have "a necessary regard to circumstances, which no statesman can disregard without producing more evil than good." These are the words of Justice Curtis, in his excellent dissenting opinion in the *Dred Scott* case, in which he defended the authors of the Declaration of Independence against the charge of hypocrisy for declaring, in a slaveowning nation, that all men are equal.

Mr. Jaffa decries the Constitution because under it slaves were property. Abraham Lincoln said on the same point that the Framers made great efforts successfully "to exclude from the Constitution the idea that there could be property in man." Lincoln was only echoing James Madison, who, in the Convention, "thought it wrong to admit in the Constitution the idea that there could be property in men."

There is always the possibility, of course, that Mr. Jaffa is right and Lincoln and Madison were wrong in their understanding of the Constitution, but can Mr. Jaffa prove it?

Moses

To the Editor of Commentary:

In the last paragraph of her article, "The Uses of Exodus" [June], Fernanda Eberstadt observes that a Bible devoid of divine revelation is just another book competing with other great books for recognition and acclaim.

Is open competition an unfair burden to place upon the author(s) of the Torah? Does the invoking of God, or the use of His name, automatically elevate a doctrine to a level that transcends all critical analysis? Would or should the reforms of Solon have escaped opposition if he had claimed revelation on Olympus; or would the Napoleonic Code have silenced its critics if Bonaparte had spent a few hours on Mont Blanc?

The injection of divine authority into human affairs presents the sort of philosophical dilemma that Plato . . . dramatized in the dialogue *Euthyphro*. If we assume that God commands generosity to widows and orphans, and that such activity is perceived as just, the pivotal question then becomes: does God command it because it is just, or is it just because God commands it?

If we respond positively to the first of these alternatives, we have indicated the existence of ethical values independent of God, and conceivably discoverable through rational inquiry; if we embrace the second alternative, then the arbitrary will of God becomes the source of moral preferences. The enforcement of a moral decree solely by virtue of divine imperative requires no rational insight whatsoever, and is no indication of either humanitarianism or ethical understanding. . . .

Even apart from the obvious question-begging, it would appear that the presumption of divine moral revelation within Scripture generates more ethical problems than it solves.

Morton D. Kogut
Las Vegas, Nevada

To the Editor of Commentary:

I found Fernanda Eberstadt's article interesting and informative. However, she passes a remark about Moses which should not remain unchallenged.

Miss Eberstadt describes Moses as a person "whose first act on the biblical scene is to murder an Egyptian overseer for smiting a Hebrew." This charge of murder against Moses, "the most humble of men," cannot be supported by the facts as described in the biblical story.

To begin with, murder is an act that by definition entails premeditation, a prior intention to kill. In Moses's case this is obviously absent, for his . . . action was taken on the spur of the moment, emerging out of the swift pace of events. As described in Exodus II, 11-12:

> He went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens; and he saw an Egyptian smiting a Hebrew, one of his brethren. And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he smote the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand. . . .

Now the sense of the term "smite" can be inferred from other biblical contexts as referring to a blow capable of killing. Thus, Moses chances upon an Egyptian, obviously an overseer, "smiting" a Hebrew who is in imminent danger of being killed; moved by the sight, he looks about for a "man." Was Moses, the great lawgiver and man of justice, concerned for his own

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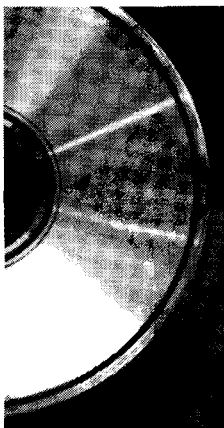

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hide, looking about like a common criminal to learn if he could evade just punishment in case he acted? Not a chance! The term "man" (*ish*) refers to a cultivated man, a man above the brutish level. Accordingly, from the context it becomes apparent that Moses was looking for someone above the brute level of the persecutor with authority to intercede. Failing to find a "man," Moses takes responsibility, . . . and intercedes—he "smote" the Egyptian.

Moses, we assume, struck with the timeliness and force necessary to save the victim's life which hung in the balance. In both cases of the infliction of blows, the Egyptian's and Moses's, the same Hebrew word for smite is used. The words tell us that Moses, the just man, meted out what turned out to be measure for measure—a blow of the same kind was given back to the Egyptian—a just response. But as it is with a blow capable of killing, sometimes it finds its mark and other times it fails. As it happened, Moses's blow was a fatal one. Finding the deed done, he hides the body rather than submit to what he knows is surely an unforgiving, tyrannical system. In sum, confronting a brutal overseer in danger of killing his charge, Moses's sense of justice leads him to intervene with a fitting response, hardly the act of a murderer.

The incident discussed is one of three incidents described in Exodus that occur before Moses's divine election to lead Israel out of bondage. As I learned from a fine discussion by Rabbi Reuven Kimmelman of Brandeis University, the events progressively reveal Moses's character as that of a feeling man who cannot stand aside when confronted with oppression, irrespective of whether it involved a Hebrew or otherwise. I can see no way that the narrative supports the view that Moses is a "murderer." Not only is premeditation absent, but it would distort the events and negate completely the thrust of what the three incidents tell of the reasons for Moses's election.

I urge Miss Eberstadt either to justify her charge or retract it. . . .

DAVID BASCH

West Hartford, Connecticut

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I read Fernanda Eberstadt's excellent article with great interest. May I add for her information that there is one more book on the same subject which Miss Eberstadt did not mention: *Understanding Exodus*, by Moshe Greenberg (published by Behrman House in 1969)? This omission does not, however, diminish the value of Miss Eberstadt's essay.

BARCU COHEN

Montreal, Canada

FERNANDA EBERSTADT writes:

Morton D. Kogut takes me to task for a supposed reluctance to place the Bible on the open market, in competition with "other great books for recognition and acclaim." But my point was that the Bible needs first to be understood on its own terms, as a sacred work chronicling God's relation to man; in that field it wipes the floor with all contenders. I would add that the Hebrew Bible also holds its own quite nicely as political theory, as law, and as a species of literary art; but to approach Scripture exclusively in such terms is to mistake its character and make pale its meaning. It is no less skewed or incomplete an undertaking than, in secular terms, studying Piero della Francesca's *Flagellation of Christ* solely as an exercise in perspective, or William the Conqueror's *Domesday Book* as a masterpiece of early English prose.

As for Mr. Kogut's unwillingness to credit the Bible as revelation, lest latter-day Moseses try to render their own opinions unassailable by claiming divine inspiration, the common judgment of later generations has proved pretty sparing in giving assent to such claims. Though Moses in his own time was reviled by skeptics, rebels, and rivals, he is one of only three men in human history whose ideas of the One God have gained the acceptance of the ages, and formed the way we think and live today. Napoleon and Solon should be so lucky (not that they had any such aims in mind).

Mr. Kogut strays or leaps into territory well beyond the scope of my article when he wonders, with Plato, about the relation between religious morality and rational morality. "Does God command it because it is just, or is it just because God commands it?" Let me just note that much of the Torah conforms with human reason, as that commodity is nowadays understood; some doesn't. The sacrifice of the red heifer in Numbers 15 seemed so outlandish that the rabbis speculated that God had ordained it on purpose to humble the Jews by making them look silly before the Gentiles. But God is not a man, as the Prophets remind us, and His ways are not always knowable.

Finally, Mr. Kogut suggests that a just deed performed under divine duress is less worthy than one arrived at freely and by the light of reason. Biblical and rabbinic Judaism is of a different opinion from Mr. Kogut's, stating explicitly on more than one occasion that the highest good consists in performing a commandment precisely because we are commanded to do so, not simply because we prefer to. The history of human experience does not persuade me that this system of morality is so patently defective as Mr. Kogut seems to think.

David Basch draws attention once again to Moses's slaying of the Egyptian taskmaster, a complex and revealing incident which he interprets as an act not of murder but of just retribution. Mr. Basch quotes the biblical description, "[Moses] looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he smote the Egyptian." Clearly, however, there must have been plenty of Israelites moping about. For what sort of man was Moses looking? An avenging angel who would punish the Egyptian in his stead, or another overseer who might report his deed to Pharaoh? Some commentators have read Moses's glance to the right and the left as an appeal to a higher authority, although (contrary to Mr. Basch's assertion) the word *ish* ("man") is used to describe both the sought-for onlooker and the brute Egyptian. But in the biblical context the primary explanation must simply be that Moses looked "this way and that" to make sure that his contemplated deed would go unobserved. Hence his burying of the body in the sand, and his fear and astonishment on learning the next day that "the thing is known."

The question remains as to whether smiting the Egyptian was an act of murder or of "measure for measure." Mr. Basch is quite right that in this tightly compressed tale of violence, the same Hebrew verb "smite," which will later be used to describe God's visiting of plagues on Egypt, characterizes both the Egyptian's beating of the Israelite and Moses's return blow. "Smite" is also used to describe a beating administered by

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one slave to another on the next day; this becomes the occasion for Moses's second intervention on behalf of his brothers, and here the verb signals how violence and oppression breed violence in the oppressed. On one later occasion in his life is Moses said to smite: at Meribah, when he strikes the rock in anger, a fateful blow which bars him from the promised land. If Moses strikes the Egyptian out of love for his people, and is thereby made their leader, he strikes the rock at Meribah out of impatience with them, and is thereby deprived of that leadership. Thus in one man are anger and national loyalty, impetuousness and caution, combined, and a single verb draws the connection between one of the first and one of the final acts of a sacred career.

Is Moses's deed "murder"? Elsewhere in the Bible (Deuteronomy 4:42, for instance) the words "murder" and "murderer" are used by Moses himself to describe the act of a man who kills another even "without knowing it" and in the absence of prior malice. Despite such warrant, however, I understand Mr. Basch's displeasure and concur in the spirit of his correction.

South Africa

To the Editor of Commentary:

Peter L. Berger and Bobby Godsell are to be congratulated for their clear, realistic, humane sketch of the forces in South Africa today ["Fantasies About South Africa," July]. If anything, they may have underestimated the power of South African society, broadly speaking, which means both black and white, to resist disintegration into violent chaos from internal and external pressures. So did the South African government, which reacted to the threat of disinvestment as if the country were a banana republic on the brink of an abyss. One will recall the nightly procession of South African ministers on American TV about a year ago, pleading with the American public that disinvestment and sanctions would hurt the very blacks they were intended to help. The pro-disinvestment opinion, not surprisingly, saw in this public stance a show of weakness. And it responded, precisely as self-righteousness without information always does, to what it saw as weakness. Then, after the U.S. Congress passed its sanctions bill, South Africa discovered that the bite was much less painful than the bark. Painful? One multinational company after the other was bought up by South African capital at bargain prices. Messrs. Berger and Godsell note that the point is finally beginning to sink in here. But if people had paid attention to Milton Friedman's article in the New York *Times* last summer, arguing—not hypothetically but from the fact of how the flight of capital from South Africa in 1960 after the Sharpeville riots gave Afrikaner capital its first big push—no one would have been surprised. Consider also the fate of Archbishop Tutu, who, once sanctions became not a threat but an actuality, was of no further interest to American TV and overnight became a political zero.

The most intellectually provocative point in the article is the paradoxical contention that South Africa, far from being too late for negotiations, may not yet be ready for them. I agree with this, but wonder how many American readers fully understand what it means. . . . The real question, which is evaded by seizing upon the word "negotiations" as some kind of wonder cure, is negotiation about what? Here the South African government has displayed a singular degree not of malice but of intellectual impoverishment in articulating what can be done to bring about political justice in South Africa.

The bottom line of South African politics is the unwillingness of the whites to move one inch toward the institution of a *normal* representative government that would bring blacks into it on the basis of a universal franchise. At work is the characteristic fear of one ethnic group of being politically swamped by another. Far from being abnormal, there would be something abnormal about the whites in South Africa if they lacked this apprehensiveness. . . .

At the same time, South Africa has a virile, free-market economy that was dependent first on cheap black labor, then on trained black labor, and now on black managerial skill; the economy offers blacks the potential to look forward, realistically, to becoming as healthy, wealthy, and wise as any white. There is now a visible black yuppie class in urban South Africa.

If a normal representative system as a practical goal is not on the table, while freedom for black social aspiration is, the sensible course for politics to follow would be to encourage the latter, which does not depend upon a normal franchise, and steer clear of the former as a political blank wall. In short, do or resolve what can be resolved now and cease trying to "solve" what is impossible to "solve" now. For the pursuit of the latter can only turn into a gimmick or palpable fake. Hendrik Verwoerd's "grand design" of apartheid, which sought to "solve" the black franchise question once and for all with a visionary territorial partition, was precisely such a gimmick.

Now South Africa, under P.W. Botha's government, has moved a long way toward dissolving Verwoerd's "solution." Blacks have had property rights in the black townships restored, they have trade unions, and many of the social apartheid laws introduced by Verwoerd have been scrapped. What is more, as Messrs. Berger and Godsell fail to emphasize, these changes were *not* made in response to pressures or even blandishments from abroad. They began before Reagan's policy of constructive engagement. Nor were they a reaction to black demonstrations or violence. They arose by virtue of the recognition within South African public opinion as a whole of the delusionary quality of Verwoerd's partition-without-a-partition. A free public opinion faced reality and changed.

Yet the government still remains stuck in its obsession with finding, or to be more precise, hatching, a "constitution" to solve the problem of the black franchise. But every such solution turns out to be another transparent cover for the maintenance of white supremacy. Since the whites, however, have no intention of endangering what they regard as their legitimate concerns for security and survival, they would be more honest if they said so and stopped talking about such claptrap as "power-sharing" in a "nation of minorities." At once, they could shift the subject of "negotiations" away from abstractions to the concrete things that sensible people want, require, and deserve, and in no way endanger white security.

Such a shift would create a new atmosphere, a new way of talking about rights and freedoms that would subordinate power to the *uses* to be made of it. Let us propose as a definition of these uses the maintenance of a free, anti-so-

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cialist, constitutional regime which repudiates, by the way, Afrikaner nationalism's own anti-capitalist origins. The whites, and the blacks equally, would be crazy to regard this end as "negotiable." Yet without making the point that the character of the regime so defined is non-negotiable, talk about *how* to give blacks a voice in the kind of government that would protect their rights, advance their interests, and hence enjoy their consent, immediately collapses into abstract wrangles about "ethnic power sharing" which get nowhere. For this the government is to blame.

To tell the truth, the real villain is not the government but the desiccated legalism that reduces the understanding of democracy to the exercise of the ballot regardless of circumstances and of consequences. It was this legalism that wrecked the decolonization process in Africa. And it is this same legalism which distracts South Africa from its primary goal—namely, fostering the social conditions which must precede the political assimilation of conquered native peoples into a democratic republic. The conditions, which do not exist now, cannot be created by a piece of paper.

Dissenting somewhat from Messrs. Berger and Godsell, I contend that the role that Western governments and private groups can play in directly influencing South African politics is much more limited than people think, either to help or to hurt. The U.S., because of sanctions, is now becoming dependent on chrome from the Soviet Union —which quietly markets its diamonds through South Africa. Who, one might ask, is shooting whom in the foot? If foreign opinion could encourage South Africa to follow its own practical common sense and get on with it, that would be a boon. But short of such sage counsel, foreign opinion has little to contribute. The problems of South Africa will be solved from within.

HOWARD BROTZ
McMaster University
Hamilton, Canada

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Congratulations on the publication of another significant article on a topic of great importance. I am referring to "Fantasies About South Africa" by Peter L. Berger and Bobby Godsell, which is particularly refreshing in that it is not only concerned with the abolition of apartheid, but with what will replace it. Such genuine concern for the well-being of the people of South Africa is sorely missing from the writings and rantings of those whose sole interest is the destruction of the existing system.

As an international lawyer who has studied the right of self-determination for many years, I would like to draw particular attention to two points in the article, to both of which the authors bring common sense and judicious analysis. . . .

The first question is whether South Africa is a colony. The authors write that it is not, which is obviously the case. How, then, does one explain the fact that the United Nations General Assembly has voted time and time again to recognize the right of self-determination of the people of South Africa? The existence of a right of self-determination presupposes the existence of a colonial situation. The UN and the international community as a whole have condemned the creation of independent black homelands, and thus the notion that there is more than one South African people. . . . Who then is the colonizer and who is the colonized? The existence of the right of self-determination for the "people of South Africa" is either a sophism (if there is only one South African people, can it be colonizing itself and can it exercise a right to independence from itself?) or it confirms the very system of apartheid which the UN has vowed to destroy (there are several peoples within South Africa with the right to self-determination).

Apartheid is obviously a human-rights issue which should not be confused with a colonial situation. All black African states and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) have recognized this. . . . Indeed, the OAU's Council of Ministers has twice denied attempts by the African National Congress and the Pan-Africanist Congress to qualify South Africa as a colonial territory.

This not only illustrates once again the "fantasies" of certain critics of apartheid, but demonstrates that these fantasies seem to be leading to legal precedents which their proponents do not foresee. The most obvious is the application of the right of self-determination to a people who are not colonized, but whose human rights are violated. The implications are ominous indeed, not only in other countries on the African continent, but in countries like the Soviet Union and China.

The second point whose implications go well beyond the situation in South Africa is the danger inherent in designating a liberation movement as "the sole legitimate representative" of a colonial people. Unfortunately, the authors draw the parallel only with the PLO. In reality this insidious formula has usually led to the emergence of totalitarian or authoritarian regimes throughout Africa and Asia following the destruction of colonialism. The most obvious example, among many, is Angola. Despite the existence of three liberation movements prior to independence, as well as several agreements among them . . . to form a coalition government, the OAU decided, in the midst of a civil war, to recognize the MPLA-led government. It thus conferred legitimacy, in the place of the people of Angola, on a Marxist-Leninist, antidemocratic, and minority movement. In practice this has meant the replacement of Portuguese colonialism with Cuban colonialism. The people of Angola have yet to decide their fate, and the civil war has continued unabated since independence.

As Messrs. Berger and Godsell point out, the issue at hand is democracy. Those who support democracy oppose apartheid because they favor freedom. The people of South Africa must not be pushed into substituting one form of slavery for another by, as Messrs. Berger and Godsell put it, "people in complete or relative safety [who] initiate events in which others are made to pay the costs." Such people very often sit in plush chairs at the United Nations.

ROBERT E. GORELICK
Brussels, Belgium

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The downside of the inherent American determination to get things accomplished, the "can do" spirit, is the feeling that simple solutions exist for every problem. . . . American reaction to the problems in South Africa is a very good example of this . . . trait at work.

South African society is seen as a monolithic group of whites oppressing a monolithic group of blacks. Only a little of the right type of pressure is seen as sufficient to end this oppression and establish in Pretoria the proverbial "city on the hill." . . .

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Peter L. Berger and Bobby Godsell do a first-rate job of examining the complex situation of South Africa in its many and confusing facets. Best of all, they do not seek to offer their own simplistic solutions. Unfortunately, I am not sure that eventual outside military intervention—perhaps as in Katanga in 1960—can be ruled out.

BRUCE BRAGER
Arlington, Virginia

New Israelis

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Ruth R. Wisse's convoluted, overwrought "Letter to a New Israeli" [June] is instructive in revealing a particular mindset among North American Jewry. Mrs. Wisse's article purports to provide sympathetic encouragement to the Israel-bound son of her friend Mona, who whines, "I thought only losers went to Israel"; in point of fact, Mrs. Wisse reveals herself to be a moaner of a similar stripe. As a young American-born Jew who has already made the transition to a new life in the Jewish state, I found this article indicative of attitudes among North American Jews who are strong supporters of Israel but who cannot understand the motivations for *aliyah* in their children, and only pay faint lip-service to its importance (and this in the only article to appear in COMMENTARY on the subject of *aliyah* in the five years that I have been counting!).

Thus Mrs. Wisse writes to her friend: "One night in the Jewish homeland and [your family] will know themselves despised, rejected, and contingent." In fact, after professionally encouraging and advising young North American immigrants to Israel over the past few years, I know that this is what these young Jews were more likely to feel while living in the Diaspora. It is true that the majority of new North American immigrants hardly felt despised or rejected in the U.S. and Canada, but certainly almost all felt contingent *as Jews* in the societies they left.

They do not feel, as Mrs. Wisse insists, "a far from equal burden of the curse of hatred that pursues" our people, because it is exactly to escape that hatred that they decided to live in Israel. It is true that, once in Israel, they might feel themselves feared and hated by a ruthless enemy, but the national struggle with the Arabs evokes a response that is far different from suffering anti-Semitism as a minority in a Gentile society. Most young Zionists do believe in the possibility that one day our problems with our Arab neighbors will be resolved (though on whose terms remains to be seen); they do not believe that any realistic solution exists to the problems (assimilation or anti-Semitism) facing the continuation of a genuine Jewish existence in the Diaspora. In short, despite Israel's security problems, they come here with the belief that they and their families' continued existence as Jews (not just religiously, but in every way) is more assured here than in the Diaspora.

This belief is naturally one that a committed Jew like Mrs. Wisse, committed to her Diaspora home, would prefer not to contemplate too deeply. . . . But I can confirm that a majority of young Jews come here for a reason she fails to mention—either they do not find their lives in Toronto, New York, or Los Angeles fulfilling enough as Jews (as Mrs. Wisse presumably finds hers), or they take the need for Jewish fulfillment more seriously.

CALEV BEN-DAVID
Jerusalem, Israel

RUTH R. WISSE writes:

After five years of counting, Calev Ben-David finds in my use of the word "*aliyah*" the occasion he has been waiting for to toot his little horn. Without wishing to spoil his fun, I note on the basis of long experience that those who toot the loudest often manage the worst.

My "Letter" was not about motives for moving to Israel, but was, rather, an attempt to account for disaffection from Israel. I hesitate to suggest that Mr. Ben-David reread the article for fear of what free association might be triggered off in him the next time around.

Minimalist Fiction

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In "The Fiction We Deserve" [June], Carol Iannone is to be applauded for saying what the "professionals" of the literary circuit do not dare to say and also for providing the best analysis I have seen of what might be called the "post-60's" mentality: the consequence of what occurs when slogans become clichés, and what is left is not actual revolution but a corrosive spiritual poison that prevents the young from ascribing any value whatsoever to their existence (neither the values of the counterculture, because they are taken for granted, nor the values of past culture because they are deemed not to be taken seriously). . . .

What is perhaps most troubling is that while there has been, as Miss Iannone notes, some belated criticism of the current trend in literature, each new member of this species is still hailed as a "voice" for his or her generation, and held up as a model for aspiring writers in college or high school. . . .

ADAM J. LIEBERMAN
Stanford, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Carol Iannone's examination of minimalism struck me as fair and considered, . . . and I found her overview of the theories that purport to analyze and thereby understand the . . . minimalists' technique and style enlightening and comprehensive. But it seems to me that the rise of minimalism has far less to do with socioeconomic factors, literary "isms," and mass media than the whims of those most fickle and insecure of creatures—fiction editors. Indeed, I have only one question: who—other than critics, editors, and the teachers and students of creative writing courses—actually reads the short stories of Amy Hempel, Deborah Eisenberg, *et al.*?

The great majority of the reading public is no more interested in deconstructionist systems than a hound dog is in ancient history. People . . . read fiction for entertainment, engagement, and involvement—in short, for the imaginative flight into another realm that fiction provides—and for no other reason. . . .

Minimalists do not write novels; they write short stories. Minimalists have minimal appeal, having alienated their potential audiences through their alienated protagonists. The real dupes are the self-appointed arbiters of literary taste, the handful of editors who, as slaves of what is really no more than fashion, keep pushing this boring, sad stuff.

JENNIFER MOSES
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Deconstructionist literary theory does not lead to so-called minimalism in contemporary fiction, as Carol Iannone so gallantly advances in her article. If anything,

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the result of fiction stemming from deconstruction would be just the opposite: an overabundance of "deep structure" symbolism and verbal virtuosity. Minimalism . . . is a dubious term anyway when applied to fiction writing. In music and painting, of course, it denotes a lessening of materials and viewpoints. In fiction, however, it merely *seems* to emphasize minor . . . events. What it more often than not does signify, though—judging from the authors Miss Iannone cites (Raymond Carver, Ann Beattie, Jayne Anne Phillips, among others)—is a certain kind of selection of subject matter.

The real reason why structuralism and particularly post-structuralism (deconstruction) have become, in Miss Iannone's words, "a kind of conventional wisdom" has more to do with the blague-infested "traditionalism" characteristic of the American university (as well as the cultural-social life of America generally), than the questioned sempiternality of deconstruction itself. . . . We should remember that the real apophasis of American cultural life is that there simply isn't much of it around (not in any authentic sense, anyway). Perhaps this is why deconstruction merely becomes a fashionable set of ideas institutionally appropriated to bolster the sagging gardens of humanist studies. In short, nothing changes—nor was that the intention of the appropriators in the first place. Harold Bloom, for instance, even goes so far as to imply that deconstruction is illegal because of its almost innate hostility toward "American national criticism."

The point . . . is that minimalist fiction has little—if anything—to do with deconstruction. . . .

ROGER RIGGINS
Utica, New York

CAROL IANNONE writes:

I thank Adam J. Lieberman and Jennifer Moses for their words of appreciation. Mr. Lieberman has put my own thoughts more succinctly than I did, and he is certainly right that the criticism of minimalism has been "belated." Miss Moses's brief description of why people read fiction gives me hope that the spark is still alive, even during the current ice age. In response to her "one question"—who reads this awful minimalist stuff?—I report, for what it's worth, that a senior editor at Scribner's once remarked in print that the "yuppie audience" buys these books, "and maybe even reads them." I'm not sure this tells us very much of a specific nature, and I sympathize with Miss Moses. The senior editor notwithstanding, it's hard to find an average lay person who actually admits to liking minimalism. No one seems to want it around, but no one knows how to get rid of it.

As for Roger Riggins, one would have hoped that a comment involving deconstruction would have been at least marginally easier to read than the deconstructionists themselves. But be that as it may, his response, together with part of Miss Moses's, makes me feel I should clarify one point: I was not suggesting that minimalism is actually deconstructionist fiction, nor even that there is a direct causal

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link, but that deconstructionist ideas, having been injected like a virus into the cultural bloodstream, have had unanticipated effects.

Technical Intelligence

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his review of my book, *Deep Black: Space Espionage and National Security* [Books in Review, May], Angelo M. Codevilla asserts that I am an "eager intellectual captive" of the arms controllers. He makes that assertion despite the fact that the book's final point is not that we ought to engage in arms control if that is deemed unwise, but only that the process is adequately verifiable. Mr. Codevilla then goes on to establish his own credentials by alluding to some past, unidentified affiliation with technical intelligence that would allow him to separate the "real from the fanciful" in my book, except that the intelligence community has warned him and others not to do so "lest they compound the damage." Finally, he sets out to show that U.S. technical-intelligence collection is nowhere near what I crack it up to be.

Since Mr. Codevilla evidently takes a great deal of pride in his knowledge of technical-intelligence collection, I hesitate to say this for fear of disturbing his sensibilities, but I must anyway: there are things "they" (whoever they are) have not told him, possibly because he lacked a high enough clearance. He makes the point, for example, that "we have never even *seen* an SS-18 missile." Well, perhaps Mr. Codevilla has never seen one, but I have. I saw it on page 30 of *Soviet Military Power 1987*, the latest edition of the Pentagon's annually updated catalogue of the USSR's arsenal. The report is actually quite explicit about the SS-18. It states:

> The highly accurate SS-18 ICBMs carry larger MIRVs than the Peacekeeper. . . . The SS-18 Mod 4 carries at least 10 MIRVs. It was designed to attack and destroy ICBMs and other hardened targets in the U.S. The SS-18 force currently deployed has the capability to destroy 65 to 80 percent of U.S. ICBM silos using two nuclear warheads against each.

There follows a chart showing all Soviet ICBMs, including the SS-18 Mod 4, which is clearly depicted as being some 100-feet long, blunt-nosed, composed of three stages, and having two exhaust nozzles. The chart also claims that 308 of the missiles (*not* about 300, but *exactly* 308) have been deployed, that they have a range of 11,000 kilometers, carry 10 or more warheads, and are cold-launched (meaning that their engines ignite after they are shot out of the silos by compressed gas, the way ballistic missiles are shot out of submarines). Clearly, then, Mr. Codevilla does not seem to know what the Defense Intelligence Agency knows. I could say why, of course, but I have been warned not to lest I compound his embarrassment.

The assertion that the unpredicted rise of the Ayatollah Khomeini is attributable to shortcomings in U.S. spy satellites and related machines is too silly to warrant rebuttal. The other events Mr. Codevilla mentions were either not surprises or else they had no life-or-death significance where the United States is concerned.

Mr. Codevilla's point that dependence on patterns of enemy action to spot deviation and gather intelligence is a weakness, not an asset, is central. The example he selects goes right to the heart of the political dimension of space reconnaissance, and therefore to the question of arms-control verification, which is ultimately based on political judgment. Here, he raises the possibility that in testing the SA-12 anti-aircraft missile as an anti-ballistic missile weapon, the Soviets may have deliberately scored only one hit in about 20 tests, specifically to fool U.S. intelligence, which they knew was watching and listening. This, Mr. Codevilla muses, could have been done to disinform Washington about the SA-12's real capability.

Such a thought process would lead to the conclusion that the Blackjack bomber which recently crashed during a test in the Soviet Union may have been deliberately destroyed to lessen the appearance of a Soviet bomber threat; that the two giant Proton boosters which failed to orbit payloads this spring were deliberately programmed to malfunction to lead us to believe that there is no serious heavy booster threat; and that the huge mockup satellite attached to the new Energia booster which was first successfully tested in mid-May was kept from reaching orbit because the Kremlin is trying to lull us into believing that it is incapable of orbiting such monster satellites.

If all this is true, Mr. Codevilla and others of his political persuasion ought to rejoice because it indicates that the Soviets are willing to inflict a punishing financial toll on themselves in a gamble that our various (and redundant) technical-collection systems will be led off the scent. And his argument that deliberately botching all those SA-12 tests would not really detract from their usefulness is patently disingenuous: would he be prepared to defend the United States with a weapon that had missed 19 of 20 intercepts, however deliberately? If his most circumspect answer is no, as I presume it must be, then why is he willing to ascribe such treasonous negligence to the opposition?

Mr. Codevilla's line of reasoning has as its modern antecedent the missile gap of the late 1950's and early 60's, when the Air Force conjured up the specter of a Soviet Union sprinkled with Potemkin villages, complete with ICBMs that were diabolically disguised to appear as church steeples on reconnaissance photographs. The thought process strained credulity then, as it does now.

WILLIAM E. BURROWS
Science and Environmental
Reporting Program
New York University
New York City

ANGELO M. CODEVILLA writes:

I thank William E. Burrows for underlining my points so unmistakably. The reader should indeed rush to page 30 of *Soviet Military Power 1987*. There he will discover just what Mr. Burrows means by "seeing" an SS-18. There are a bunch of charts, there is the description of the SS-18 that Mr. Burrows quotes, and then there is an *artist's conception* of an SS-24. On pages 28-29 there is an impressive *artist's conception* of an SS-18 follow-on.

A professor of journalism ought to be able to tell the difference between photographs on the one hand, and words and drawings on the other. If Mr. Burrows has ever laid eyes on a photograph of an SS-18 (not its canister, which is among the world's most photographed objects), he should call the CIA. My eight years on the staff of the Senate Intelligence Committee lead me to believe that U.S. intelligence would beat a path to his door.

The information about the SS-18

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and similar things in *Soviet Military Power*, as well as in the darkest drawers of U.S. intelligence, is partial. The SS-18 is indeed somewhere around 100 feet long (judging from the canister) and has three stages. Without ever having seen it, we know that it launches ten warheads, and have reason to believe it can carry at least 14 without modification. But how many SS-18s are there? And where are they? Mr. Burrows claims (but note that the U.S. government does not explicitly say) that "exactly" 308 have been deployed. That supposition flows exclusively from the fact that the Soviets have declared that number for purposes of SALT, and from our general observation of activities around the silos that house the SS-18s. But even under SALT, the Soviets have 20 more "test" silos that could legitimately be loaded with SS-18s. Still, this is beside the point: the U.S. simply has not seen each of the SS-18 silos loaded with SS-18 missiles—much less has the U.S. watched to make sure that they were not unloaded and taken elsewhere.

More important, neither Mr. Burrows nor any other Westerner has any idea how many SS-18s (or any other major Soviet missile) have been built, where the excess missiles are stored, or in what condition. We do know from a variety of sources that the Soviets routinely practice refiring some silos. But given our lack of specific knowledge about production, transportation, and storage, that general information, although interesting, is not terribly useful. Note also that on one of the few occasions when one of our satellites was not where it was supposed to have been we actually saw a missile, which had heretofore (and has since) been classified as silo-launched, out in the woods with what appeared to be standard mobile-launching equipment.

My point about the U.S. intelligence community's ignorance about the Ayatollah Khomeini was not at all that it shows any deficiency in the design of U.S. satellites. Rather, it was to refute Mr. Burrows's point that because of our satellites nothing of consequence can happen in the world without our knowledge—including the amorous affairs of Soviet military officers. If Mr. Burrows believes this, I know a bridge I can sell him.

Now to the central point: intelligence that relies on means of collection known to the enemy, *and* on interpreting the enemy's overt patterns of behavior, is an invitation to deception. It would be interesting to see Mr. Burrows try to dispute this directly. Instead he twists what I said about the SA-12. I said that the Soviets, knowing how important the judgment of U.S. intelligence is about the SA-12 in the internal U.S. debate on antimissile weapons, and knowing how we observe tests of the SA-12, could have used "controlled miss distances." This is hardly outlandish. Indeed, the U.S. has used and will again use controlled miss distances in its tests of guidance systems for space-based kinetic kill vehicles (Delta 180 and 181). The U.S. has done this openly in order to comply with some Americans' interpretation of the ABM treaty. The technique works very well. Why should the Soviets refrain from using it? Mr. Burrows, I suspect, knows that this is very different from scoring "only one hit in about 20 tests" and "botching all those SA-12 tests." His point, then, is no point.

Nor is it appropriate for him to mention Soviet rockets and bombers that blow up—which I never touched on—to caricature a point he cannot answer.

As for the "missile gap" of the late 1950's and early 60's, I would urge Mr. Burrows to set aside polemics long enough to look at history. The Air Force's estimate of the number of Soviet missiles was not based on any theories about Potemkin villages, but on hard (though partial) evidence. The number of missiles turned out to be very close to the mark. However, the missiles in question were not ICBMs, but rather IRBMs, some of which still threaten Europe.

Mr. Burrows's central contention, that "the [arms-control] process is adequately verifiable," is the product of a will to believe so strong that it causes him to "see" things that don't exist, to neglect standard techniques of deception, and to sneer in comfortable ignorance.

Utopians & Realists

To the Editor of Commentary:

I am dismayed by the shallow analysis in David Gress's review of Stanley Hoffmann's new book, *Janus and Minerva: Essays in the Theory and Practice of International Relations* [Books in Review, July]. Starting with the title and concluding with his parting words on Hoffmann's supposedly "flawed and utopian view of the way the world works," Mr. Gress exhibits several fundamental misunderstandings of postwar political realism. After getting so much of the basic theory wrong, it is no wonder that Mr. Gress has difficulty connecting it to the practical suggestions offered by Hoffmann.

The postwar realists—most notably the late Hans J. Morgenthau—have been among the most consistent and systematic thinkers of their time. To suggest that Morgenthau, Hoffmann, and others "suddenly and paradoxically turned utopian," and that "they discovered in themselves a hitherto unsuspected faith that the UN was really going to lead to that universal pacification proclaimed as the goal of politics by Immanuel Kant in the 18th century," is to deny the coherence and logical progression of their thought. Such a facile dismissal will not hold up under close scrutiny.

The fact is that in 1948 Morgenthau wrote in his famous treatise *Politics Among Nations* that "experience has shown that the attempt to use the United Nations for the purpose of forcing upon either of the superpowers [an] agreement only aggravates the disagreement and increases the danger of war." Morgenthau and most other realists never wavered from this position. The "new" United Nations, as Morgenthau liked to call his non-Charter-based interpretation of it, could make a "modest" contribution to world peace, but would by no means be a panacea. It is no accident that the updated 1985 edition of *Politics Among Nations* concludes its chapter on international government with the statement that when it comes to the prevention of war, "we must look elsewhere than to the United Nations." There is certainly no utopian turn here.

Where there has been something of a turn in realist thinking has been in the realists' position on "power politics" as it relates to nuclear weapons. This turn, however, far from being utopian or irrational, is based on a reasoned application of their thought to new political and military realities. The burgeoning presence of nuclear weapons has virtually exploded the realist theory of power politics, threatening to render it irrelevant. What, after all, does "power poli-

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tics" mean in a nuclear world? This question has preoccupied postwar realists for two generations now and will probably continue to do so.

Far from proposing a utopian answer, the realists, to my eye, have been rather practical in their approach to solving this question. They have recognized that common ground exists between the superpowers and that some of their interests do coincide. And when interests coincide, business can be done. It is unfortunate that it has taken the ominous presence of nuclear weapons to drive that point home. It must be pointed out that the realists hold no illusions that arms control or disarmament can itself be the solution to international peace, but they do believe it can reduce tensions.

By painting the theory of political realism with so broad a brush, Mr. Gress has obscured its complexities and most of its vitality. It is easy to assign labels—whether "utopian," "realist," "liberal," or "conservative"; it is a lot harder to make them meaningful.

JOEL ROSENTHAL
Yale University
New Haven, Connecticut

DAVID GRESS writes:

Joel Rosenthal makes two assertions. One, that Hans J. Morgenthau did not abandon realism in favor of a utopian belief in the ability of the UN to restrain war. Two, that all or most realists did change their thinking about power politics, not because of any faith in the UN, but because of "the burgeoning presence of nuclear weapons." The first assertion is misleading, the second is false.

It is true that the current (sixth) edition of Morgenthau's *Politics Among Nations* contains the statement that for the prevention of war "we must look elsewhere than to the United Nations." It is also true, however, that in the very next chapter it is argued at length that a true world community is capable of emerging from the work of the specialized agencies of the UN, such as UNESCO, and that such a community could and ought to be the foundation of a world government. Morgenthau was exactly in the Kantian tradition in believing in world government as a solution to the problems of power and peace.

Moreover, in the updated edition of *Politics Among Nations*, Morgenthau—or his follower, Kenneth Thompson, who prepared this edition—also argues that Soviet and U.S. purposes in the world are basically similar; that there is an "unregulated arms race"; that Brezhnev meant it when he said that there would be no victors in a thermonuclear war; and that arms-control treaties are effective and desirable instruments of peace. These are not the beliefs of a realist, and some of them fly squarely in the face of well-known facts about world politics and Soviet strategy and ideology. A realist is not entitled to say that power politics ought to change; only to estimate whether they will in fact change.

This brings up Mr. Rosenthal's second assertion. Morgenthau's belief in an international community emerging from the UN and in the ability of the West, through non-ideological diplomacy, to change power politics to peace politics, was evident to another realist, Raymond Aron, as long ago as 1954. Writing against Morgenthau and George Kennan, he said:

> They make the radical error of mistaking for the essence of world politics a set of practices and a theory characteristic of those happy eras when within a stabilized civilization an unwritten code of legitimacy and illegitimacy sets limits to the contests of states. . . . To suggest that one should behave toward an empire animated by a secular religion in the same way as one behaved toward czarist Russia . . . is very much the opposite of realism and could lead to the disaster one seeks to avoid.

Aron never abandoned this argument which, I maintain, is fundamental to any realism worthy of the name. Just before his death in 1983, he wrote with cool anger and contempt of Kennan's and Morgenthau's illusions that

> the desire for a true entente between the Big Two . . . survives unex-

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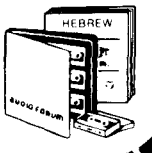

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pressed in the unconscious of many Americans. . . . It will not lead to a condominium until the day that the American Republic ceases to believe in itself and that the men of the Kremlin lose faith in the ideology by which they rule over the bodies and the minds of 230 million souls.

The bubbly faith in Gorbachev's good intentions is proof that the first condition may be coming to pass; it is no evidence whatsoever for the second.

As for "the burgeoning presence of nuclear weapons," which Mr. Rosenthal, along with many, sees as justifying the betrayal of realism, let us remember that the explosive power of the U.S. nuclear arsenal was four times greater in 1960 than it is today, and that the weapons of 1960 were far less accurate and far more destructive than today's. The anti-nuclear turn of the former American realists has nothing to do with the actual evolution of nuclear weapons and everything to do with liberal guilt. If there were space in this reply, I might quote Aron again as an antidote to this pervasive disease.

In sum, Mr. Rosenthal is wrong that realist thinking changed because of nuclear weapons. Rather, a majority of American realists abandoned realism; Raymond Aron and the majority of French realists did not. If realism means anything at all, it means looking at the world as it is and not as we want it to be. The irony is that Morgenthau's political despair late in life (recorded by his last student, Francis Boyle, a professor of law and activist on the extreme Left) was unjustified and unnecessary. Had he held fast to realism, he might not have fallen into such a state.

Fact & Fiction

To the Editor of Commentary:

Joshua Muravchik's review of *The Lobby* by Edward Tivnan [Books in Review, July] is noteworthy not only in successfully rebutting some of the author's highly questionable conclusions but in exposing Tivnan's incredibly sloppy journalism as well.

Two instances cited by Mr. Muravchik involving myself are illustrative. Tivnan writes about me "threatening" and "pledging retaliation" against U.S. Senators. But nowhere does he identify the sources for these alleged threats, nor did he ever make any effort to verify them with me. The reason for this lack of specificity is simple—his accounts are totally without foundation. And this is characteristic of many other contrived situations in his book.

Perhaps Tivnan's book should have been more appropriately labeled fiction, since he has played so fast and loose with the facts. Fortunately, there are enough knowledgeable readers who can recognize fiction, and bad fiction at that, when they see it.

Morris J. Amitay
Washington, D.C.

Teen-age Pregnancy

To the Editor of Commentary:

I take great issue with André Ryerson's appraisal of *Risking the Future*, edited by Cheryl D. Hayes [Books in Review, May]. As a PhD. candidate in social welfare, I have studied the problem of teen-age pregnancy for many years and I have also worked with teen-agers, both pregnant and non-pregnant, in a variety of settings.

Mr. Ryerson objects to the National Research Council's recommendation that contraception be made readily available for sexually-active teen-agers. Instead, he argues for the value of "sexual restraint" (i.e., abstinence) and accuses the book of being "another symptom of the problem it sets out to address."

In my opinion, as well as in the opinion of many social scientists . . . , to advocate abstinence as the sole means to reduce teen-age pregnancy is . . . unrealistic. It is an approach that has not worked, as shown by the continuing high incidence of teen-age pregnancy in the United States. In contrast, the countries of Western Europe (as well as Canada) which have experienced dramatically lower rates of teen-age pregnancy have accepted the fact that many of their teen-agers are sexually active (at rates comparable to those of the U.S.) without necessarily condoning such behavior. Their approach has been to provide sexuality education as well as easily accessible low-cost or free contraceptive services to sexually active young people.

Mr. Ryerson refers to what he terms "a morally responsible course of action." But is it morally responsible to allow de facto, by our inaction, about 10 percent of our teen-agers to experience a pregnancy each year because these teen-agers are not abiding by standards of behavior that some adults have set for them?

Mr. Ryerson implies that the authors of *Risking the Future* do not call for abstinence . . . to lessen the incidence of teen-age pregnancy, yet the authors clearly do recommend this course of action in several places. They suggest "a strategy to help teen-agers, both male and female, develop ways to postpone sexual initiation." In their section on preventive interventions they propose programs that impart knowledge and/or influence attitudes, and an important attitude change they propose is abstinence. In their section on priorities for policies and programs they again call for delaying the initiation of sexual activity. . . . It seems that Mr. Ryerson's objection is that other approaches are considered as well, including encouraging contraception for those teen-agers who are sexually active and providing alternatives to adolescent childbearing and child-rearing. . . .

The policies advocated by the authors seem to me to be sound as well as consistent with the positions advanced by others who have worked in preventing teen-age pregnancy. To the limited extent that these policies have been implemented, they have been successful in reducing the incidence of pregnancy among adolescents.

Therefore, instead of being a symptom, as Mr. Ryerson suggests, I believe that *Risking the Future* . . . offers feasible strategies for addressing the problem.

Barbara K. Epstein
Cleveland, Ohio

André Ryerson writes:

Barbara K. Epstein has misunderstood some of my arguments, and missed others. I did not take a stand against making contraception available to teen-agers, nor did I argue that encouraging young teens to postpone sexual intercourse until they have reached greater physical and psychological maturity is "the sole means" to confront the epidemic in teen pregnancies. It is, however, the approach most historically effective in diverse cultures, and the most widely approved by American parents. These parents, furthermore, have a right to ask that a completely different set of signals not be given their children the moment they enter a public school. This centrally involves parental

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rights, not mere social-science prescription. It astonishes me that the authors of *Risking the Future*, like Miss Epstein and countless social scientists, have no grasp of this key aspect of the problem.

It is one thing for a private agency to which individuals may choose to go (like Planned Parenthood) to offer birth-control information and devices; it is quite another to install equivalent services and encourage their use in public schools which children are required by law to attend. This legal imposition by a public institution whose bills are paid by a diverse citizenry imposes restraints on action respecting which too many social-science professionals, regrettably, appear completely ignorant. As in the case of "peace education," a public-service sector is allowing its own enthusiasms to ride roughshod over the rights of those it is paid to serve. The result may reasonably be called coercive social engineering.

Miss Epstein points out (as I did in my review) that the authors of *Risking the Future* cite approaches "to postpone sexual initiation" as a desirable policy goal. They could hardly have done otherwise. But they add that there are few programs currently pursuing this approach, and so "there is little evidence to document [its] effectiveness." The obvious answer, one might think, would be to recommend such programs, which would have the advantage of enjoying the wide support of parents. Instead, general dissemination of contraceptive pills is recommended, along with abortion counseling and services, maternity education and guidance for teen mothers in the schools, so that fourteen-year-olds "should have a complete set of options available without the interposition of moral hounding." The reason for this approach is that the panel of experts in question prefers "kindness rather than exhortation, and research rather than denial." The policy direction is clear.

Miss Epstein ignores the evidence found in *Risking the Future* (as do its authors) that convincing fourteen-year-olds to use contraceptives is a daunting task, since "young teen-agers are handicapped in assessing the personal risk of pregnancy because of their cognitive immaturity." Worthy of thought as well is the fact that the contraceptive method preferred by the authors of *Risking the Future*, the pill, is not known to be of any value in preventing herpes or AIDS, both of which rage at disproportionate rates in the very urban populations where teen pregnancy is most uncontrolled. One would expect doctors, who number among the report's authors, to have borne such risks in mind.

What is involved here, on the one hand, is a failure of common sense and moral nerve, not in ordinary Americans but in the elites that presume to guide them; and, on the other hand, a readiness in social scientists and teachers to impose solutions they favor without regard to the limits on state power which Americans have long considered to be their birthright.

Polish History

To the Editor of Commentary:

Ever since Commentary published the article by Lucy S. Dawidowicz about myself and Marek Edelman ["The Curious Case of Marek Edelman," March], I have received a steady stream of correspondence from your readers, many of whom have now taken the trouble to read my books on Polish history. It seems to be widely assumed, however, that *Heart of Europe: A Short History of Poland* (Oxford University Press) is merely a condensation of my larger, two-volume work *God's Playground: A History of Poland* (Columbia University Press). In fact, *Heart of Europe* was designed as a study of the roots of the contemporary crisis in Poland, and as such deliberately steers clear of Jewish and other themes, which are somewhat peripheral to recent events. *God's Playground*, in contrast, was designed as a survey of Poland's multinational heritage, and hopefully addresses itself at every stage to the rich variety of non-Polish strands in the story.

Norman Davies
University of London
School of Slavonic and East
European Studies
London, England

"Alzheimer's"

To the Editor of Commentary:

I was tremendously moved by Kelly Cherry's story, "Alzheimer's" [June]. The author has managed somehow to personalize the illness, without making it trivial, and at the same time, expose the tragedy of it all.

Commentary is to be congratulated for running the story, and Kelly Cherry even more so for writing such a powerful piece of work.

Thomas C. Wallace
New York City

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Crime, the Constitution, And the Iran-Contra Affair

L. Gordon Crovitz

IT WAS obvious that the announcement on November 25, 1986 by Attorney General Edwin Meese that profits from the secret sale of arms to Iran had been diverted to the democratic resistance in Nicaragua would trigger the bloodiest political battle since Watergate. It was not, however, obvious that self-evidently illegal acts (such as the Watergate break-in) had been committed in the Iran-*contra* affair. On the contrary, an excellent case could have been made that the President had authority for every aspect of the affair, from the arms sales to the diversion. The President, for example, could have taken the position that while his subordinates had been out of line in not getting his permission to go ahead with the diversion, it had nevertheless been a good idea and that it had broken no law (since the relevant statute did not apply to him or his staff).

Instead, in the panic to avoid charges of a cover-up, the Reagan administration decided that a special prosecutor should be appointed. It was a disastrous decision and its effects are likely to be with us for a very long time to come.

I

FROM its earliest days, it was the policy of the Reagan administration to work toward removing the Marxist-Leninist Sandinista government in Nicaragua. But the administration had a problem. There was a coterie of liberal Congressmen which opposed any resistance to the Sandinistas, let alone their removal. Yet at the same time Congress did not want to be saddled with the responsibility for permanently losing Nicaragua to Communism, with the horrific strategic dangers this would bring. Accordingly, the hawks in the White House and the doves on Capitol Hill entered into an implicit agreement. The White House would do what it could to help the *contras* in their war against the Sandinistas, but Congress was not going to make any consistent policy of its own. This fateful agreement was enacted in the notorious Boland amendments, named for their principal author, Representative Edward Boland, Democrat of Massachusetts.

There were, in all, five Boland amendments, spanning the four-year period from December 21, 1982 to October 17, 1986. Each was attached to a defense or intelligence bill and, because of the general breakdown of the budget process in recent years, most of them wound up as small details in massive continuing resolutions. Some prohibited any of the appropriated or authorized funds from being used for the *contras*, while others authorized restricted funds for humanitarian aid, military aid, or both.

Contrary to claims later made by some members of Congress, including Representative Boland himself, the amendments did not by their terms apply to activities by President Reagan or his staff at the National Security Council (NSC). In any case, none of the Boland amendments included any civil or criminal penalties; no prosecutions were envisioned in the wildest congressional imagination. As former National Security Adviser Robert McFarlane testified before the Iran-*contra* congressional panel, the restraints on the executive branch intended by the amendments were political, not legal.

Why then did President Reagan fail to veto the Boland amendments? One reason was that, in the absence of a line-item veto, he could not do so without "closing down" the entire federal-government apparatus until the veto was overridden or a new continuing resolution was passed by Congress.

But there is another and even more important reason why none of the Boland amendments was vetoed—they were all negotiated compromises between, on the one side, liberal Congressmen who wanted a flat ban on aid to the *contras* and, on the other side, the President and his congressional allies who wanted somehow to provide the *contras* with enough support to keep them in the field until a majority in Congress was willing to resume funding.

In other words, there was no veto because no one at the time thought that any of the Boland amendments represented a complete bar to support of the *contras* by the executive branch. Any

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such constraint—one, for example, which might have prohibited the President from mentioning to visiting heads of state that he would appreciate it if they would help the *contras*—would have raised the most fundamental questions about the constitutional separation of powers.

Thus, after much bargaining by the White House over which restrictions would be acceptable and which would be unacceptable, political compromises were reached. It was understood that the administration would adhere to the letter of the Boland prohibitions, but would unilaterally use its inherent foreign-policy powers to pursue its policy of helping the *contras*. President Reagan would do what he could for the *contras* outside of authorized appropriations, while Congressmen who opposed any aid could rest assured that they had done what *they* could to cut the *contras* off.

Anyone looking for evidence that the Boland amendments were compromises which did not attempt to rule out White House activities can find it in an unlikely source—a special edition of the *Congressional Record* prepared by the Library of Congress and containing the entire legislative history of the amendments. This volume was commissioned by Democratic Representative Bill Alexander of Arkansas for the precise purpose of showing that any intention to exclude the President or the NSC was "conspicuously absent." Ironically, it proves the opposite.

DESCRIBING the legislative debate on the first Boland amendment (or Boland One, as it has come to be called), which was in effect during 1982-83, the Library of Congress report concludes that "it was clearly understood at the time of enactment that the compromise would not cut off all direct or indirect assistance to the *contras*."

The best way to grasp what Boland One did not include in its prohibition on aid is to consider the alternative amendment proposed by then Representative Tom Harkin, Democrat of Iowa. The Harkin amendment to the fiscal 1983 Defense Appropriations bill would have barred any help for the *contras* from any government source whatsoever, including the White House and the NSC, and would have forbidden any U.S. officials from "carrying out military activities in or against Nicaragua." This was much broader than Boland One's vague prohibition of military aid "for the purpose of overthrowing the government of Nicaragua"—a prohibition which did not apply to aid for other purposes, such as interdicting the flow of arms from Nicaragua to Marxist insurgents in El Salvador, or to fund military attacks that would cause the Sandinista government to teeter, but not quite to topple.

President Reagan sent word through the Republican members of Congress that if approved, the Harkin amendment would be vetoed as unconstitutional. This led Representative Boland to craft his compromise which, he said during the floor debate, "is agreeable to the executive branch. They do not like it, but it is agreeable to them. I believe [the Harkin version] is not necessary. I further believe that it sets a bad precedent." This bad precedent was the use of appropriations bills to usurp the President's foreign-policy powers.

There was a similar fight in the Senate, where Christopher Dodd, the Connecticut Democrat, proposed an all-inclusive amendment along the lines of the Harkin proposal. It said that "no funds should be obligated or expended, directly or indirectly . . . in support of irregular military forces or paramilitary groups operating in Central America." In introducing his amendment, Senator Dodd criticized Boland One for leaving the White House free to pursue its policies in Nicaragua. "There are any number of ways of circumventing [the Boland amendment]. . . . It is going to provide a green light for the continued activity that we have seen reported over and over again, in the last several weeks and months, suggesting that we are already deeply involved in a broader conflict in Central America. My amendment is more open-ended, more of a declaration of policy."

Senator John Chafee, the liberal Republican from Rhode Island, replied that Senator Dodd's proposal would be "an extreme injunction to impose on the activities of the United States, directly or indirectly." He added: "The Senator from Connecticut is going to say [in opposing Boland], 'Well that is big enough to drive a truck through.' The question really before us is, is this body going to insert a complete prohibition of activities against this nation? We are making no concession that activities are taking place anywhere, but are we going to tie the hands of the President? After all, it is the President who is at the top of the heap in this. . . . I do not believe we have ever imposed a draconian restriction such as proposed by the Senator from Connecticut in the past with 'no activities, direct or indirect.' "

By rejecting the Harkin and Dodd amendments in favor of Boland One, Congress showed that it had no intention of "tying the President's hand." Indeed, Boland One was so clearly understood as a compromise that it passed the House unanimously. But so vague was the wording eventually approved that by the time of the debate on Boland Two, not even members of Congress themselves could agree on what the Boland One proscriptions meant.

Thus Representative Lee Hamilton, Democrat of Indiana (and future co-chairman of the Iran-*contra* hearings), apparently under the misapprehension that the Harkin amendment had passed, claimed that Congress had prohibited all covert aid. "Covert action against Nicaragua is against our law. The first law in question is the Boland amendment, passed last year." Laboring under the same wishful misapprehension, Representative Michael Barnes, Democrat of Maryland, declared

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that aid to the *contras* "is illegal under domestic law, as we all know."

This assertion outraged the then ranking Republican on the Intelligence Committee, Representative Kenneth Robinson of Virginia, who accused the liberals of instantaneous revisionism. "The House voted down a legislative amendment which would have denied funds for the purpose of carrying out covert activity. The House, however, adopted the Boland amendment by a vote of 411 to 0. In so doing, the House approved the concept that a covert paramilitary operation in Nicaragua was acceptable."

Representative Robinson had good reason to be bitter about the new liberal view of Boland. "I took some of those 411 votes with me. I argued some of my colleagues into going along at that time because I thought I understood it, and I still think I understand it, and I do not believe the Boland amendment has been violated by this administration based on that understanding." He added that he now regretted having "stood here defending the Boland amendment, arguing my colleagues on the Republican side to vote for it."

So much for Boland One. According to the Library of Congress report, Boland Two, authorizing $24 million in military aid for the *contras* in 1983-84, "arose from a desire by the House to curtail all covert support for the *contras*, while the Senate favored funding such support both through earmarked funds and the use of the CIA reserve for contingencies." First Congress compromised with the administration. Then, within Congress, liberals compromised with conservatives. The result was even greater vagueness.

Boland Three (1984-85), which was arguably the most restrictive of the series (and which was destined to become the most notorious as a result of the Iran-*contra* affair), banned the CIA, the Pentagon, or "any other agency or entity of the United States involved in intelligence activities" from using appropriated funds to aid the Nicaraguan resistance. Here the disagreement has been over which agencies were covered. Did the prohibition apply to the President? Did it apply to his personal staff at the National Security Council? In an era when Presidents cannot make phone calls without help from staff, if Boland Three did not apply to the President, how could it apply to his closest foreign-policy aides?

After the amendment was passed, Representative Boland inserted a statement into the record claiming that "It clearly prohibits any expenditure, including those from accounts for salaries and all support costs. The prohibition is so strictly written that it also prohibits transfers of equipment at no cost."

This broad interpretation would be hard to sustain in court. For one thing, the authorization act to which Boland Three was attached specified which intelligence agencies were affected. These were: the CIA; the Pentagon; the Defense Intelligence Agency; the National Security Agency; the Army, Navy, and Air Force; the State Department; the Treasury Department; the Energy Department; the FBI; and the Drug Enforcement Administration. The President and the NSC were absent from this list. The NSC was similarly absent from a 1981 Executive Order listing the intelligence agencies.

Moreover, the Library of Congress report on the legislative history of Boland Three acknowledges that the prohibition on aid was far from comprehensive. "Unlike some other appropriations statutes, there is no express bar to the use of funds for activities for which Congress has denied assistance." Absent was the usual catchall phrase prohibiting the use for the proscribed purpose of any funds otherwise authorized; there was no provision that read: "Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no funds may be appropriated under this or any other act for the purpose of" aiding the *contras*.

Indeed, during the debate over Boland Four (August 8, 1985 to March 31, 1986), which included the Michel amendment providing $27 million in humanitarian aid to the *contras*, Representative Boland said that "the President, under the Michel amendment, can determine the agency which will dispense this aid," but that under his own amendment, the President would "be precluded from using an intelligence agency." Acting under these very Boland guidelines, the Senate Appropriations Committee expressly stated that while the President could determine how the money would be used, it "requires the National Security Council to monitor implementation of the proposal." Although President Reagan later chose a unit of the State Department to oversee the humanitarian aid, it was clear that Congress did not consider the NSC barred by the Boland amendments.*

II

Neither the fact that the Boland amendments were vaguely worded political compromises, nor the evidence that they were not

* The fifth and last Boland amendment (December 4, 1985 to October 17, 1986), was attached to the Intelligence Authorization Act. This bill permitted a classified amount of military and paramilitary aid to the *contras*. It also expressly authorized the State Department to "solicit humanitarian assistance for the Nicaraguan democratic resistance . . . so long as such third country assistance is furnished from the third country's own resources, and the United States does not enter into any provision of U.S. assistance to a third country on the provision of assistance by such third country to the Nicaraguan democratic resistance."

The Boland amendments expired as the United States resumed funding the *contras*. In June 1986, President Reagan got congressional approval of a $100-million aid package: $70 million for military aid and $30 million for humanitarian aid, including $3 million for a human-rights group to monitor the activities of the *contras*.

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meant to apply to the National Security Council, is likely to deter the independent counsel (or special prosecutor), Lawrence Walsh, from using them as the basis for criminal charges against former members of the NSC staff, and perhaps others as well.

As Walsh apparently sees it, his job as special prosecutor is to prosecute—to seek criminal charges arising from the Iran-*contra* affair—and his staff of a deputy counsel, 24 associate counsels, 35 FBI agents, and 15 Customs and Internal Revenue Service agents has been tenacious. This staff has conducted more than 1,000 interviews, and subpoenaed more than one million pages of documents, including a blanket call for all relevant Justice Department papers. Last June, Walsh signed a two-year lease for 11,000 square feet of prime office space in Washington, D.C.—with an option for a third year.

There is a saying that any prosecutor can indict a ham sandwich if he so chooses. In normal circumstances, however, there are well-established guidelines limiting prosecutorial discretion and constraining law-enforcement attorneys from bringing cases that go beyond the behavior envisioned by the criminal code. Walsh is not operating in these normal circumstances. The position of special prosecutor (later renamed independent counsel) was created by Congress in the Ethics in Government Act (1978) to investigate high-ranking executive-branch officials. Unlike other federal prosecutors, these independent counsels are appointed and supervised by a panel of judges, not by the Attorney General. So far as Walsh in particular is concerned, he has already shown that neither does he consider himself bound by normal Justice Department guidelines and precedents.

For example, he has said that if an investigation finds "probable cause that a crime has been committed, it is the duty of the independent counsel to prosecute." Yet according to the Justice Department's manual for the guidance of U.S. Attorneys, probable cause "is, of course, a threshold consideration only. Merely because this requirement can be met in a given case does not automatically warrant prosecution."

As an indication of his refusal to abide by the usual rules of prosecutorial discretion, Walsh's first significant act was to charge two fundraisers for the Nicaraguan resistance, Carl "Spitz" Channell and Richard Miller, with conspiring to defraud the government by claiming a tax exemption for contributions used to buy arms for the *contras*. As part of a plea bargain (whose terms we may never know), both pleaded guilty, named Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North as a co-conspirator, and agreed to cooperate with Walsh's investigation.

The problem with the charges and the plea bargain is that no criminal law was broken. Using a tax-exempt organization to raise money to buy weapons is at most a civil violation. This is the view of both the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and the tax division of the Justice Department. The IRS does not normally indict anyone even if a tax-exempt status has been abused. Instead, a civil fine is occasionally assessed. The only criminal charges ever to arise before from abusing charitable status involved obvious cases of tax evasion, such as phony churches. The Assistant Attorney General for the tax division at the time of Walsh's action, Roger Olsen, says that "it is very, very rare for a criminal case to be brought" for allegedly abusing tax-exempt status; nor does he know of any case where a group that provided arms for foreign resistance groups was denied tax-exempt status. Assistant Attorney General John Bolton puts the matter bluntly: "The theory under which Channell pled is a wacko theory."

In fact, the tax code's generosity with exemptions for charities means that raising money to buy arms for the *contras* is probably not even a civil offense. Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3) grants tax-exempt status to groups "organized and operated exclusively for religious, charitable, scientific, . . . literary or educational purposes." The key word is "charitable," whose meaning is based on the Charitable Uses Act of 1601. This Elizabethan statute lists four purposes for charities: relief of poverty, education, religion, and "other purposes beneficial to the community." The American tradition has been to view these beneficial purposes broadly enough to include such things as sending donations to the Abraham Lincoln Brigade during the Spanish Civil War. Why not, then, buying arms for the *contras*?

The Channell-Miller plea bargain put the other participants in the Iran-*contra* affair on notice that no charge may be too vague, technical, or arcane for Walsh to bring against them. To be sure, Walsh could conceivably indict one or two people outside the government on familiar charges of criminality. For example, Richard V. Secord and his partner Albert Hakim, who acted as the "commercial cutouts" in the arms deal, could be accused of profiting illegally from government property when they deposited the profits or "residuals" in their own bank accounts (although they could make a compelling case that the government got what it bargained for when the Treasury was compensated in advance for the asked-for price of the arms).* But news reports have suggested that

* So far as the arms sales themselves are concerned, they do not seem to have been illegal, even on the broadest interpretation. Trading arms for hostages may have been bad policy, but it broke no laws. Moreover, the fact that President Reagan approved the transfers to Iran, and that the arms shipped to Nicaragua by Secord came from outside the U.S., would appear to rule out indictments under the Arms Export Control Act, the Foreign Assistance Act, and the Export Administration Act—all of which have been mentioned as possible bases for prosecution.

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Walsh is mainly trying to establish that officials in the executive branch conspired to "defraud" the government when they helped the *contras*. Here he is presumably relying on the single vaguest crime in the entire 50-plus volumes of the U.S. Code, "Conspiracy to Defraud the United States" (18 United States Code Section 371). The charge would be that even if the NSC was not covered by the Boland amendments, it was a "fraud" on the U.S. government (or, at least, on Congress) for Lieutenant Colonel North, Rear Admiral John Poindexter, and others to do anything that helped the *contras*. Under this charge, moreover, Walsh might not even have to prove to a jury that the indicted parties ever intended to commit a crime.

According to Blackstone, "an unwarrantable act without a vicious will is no crime at all." Except for a few crimes, such as involuntary manslaughter, this requirement of evil intent still remains, at least in theory. The evil intent (*mens rea*) must be joined to the commission of an evil act (*actus reus*). Or as Senator James McClure, Republican of Idaho, put it during the Iran-*contra* hearings: "If it is a matter of criminal law, there has to be a union of act and intent. A person must violate a law and he must intend to violate it by having a guilty mind at the time that he performs the act in order to have the requisite basis for a criminal prosecution." And as Attorney General Meese added: "The law must be such that a person is given fair warning of what the crime is he might be accused of."

However, the use of the conspiracy statutes in recent decades by federal prosecutors has eroded the protection to individuals offered by the *mens rea* and *actus reus* requirements. A statute such as Conspiracy to Defraud the United States, itself originally intended only to catch tax evaders, contains language broad enough to provide prosecutors with new avenues of attack.

Nearly all normal crimes—murder, theft, etc.—have their *actus reus* requirements defined with great precision in the statute books. In contrast, the mushy concept of "fraud," especially when linked with the equally broad idea of "conspiracy," can transform any act a jury opposes into a crime. Hence these anti-fraud statutes have come under heavy attack by civil libertarians. Abraham Goldstein of the Yale Law School, in a landmark article in the 1959 *Yale Law Journal*, urged Congress to repeal Conspiracy to Defraud the United States. "Defense counsel is placed in the unenviable position of not knowing what the defendant is supposed to have agreed to do," Professor Goldstein wrote, describing the statute as having created a "Kafkaesque crime, unknown and unknowable except in terms of the facts of each case—and even then, not until the verdict has been handed down."

Aside from the broad conspiracy charge, there is another code section that would allow Walsh simply to invoke "fraud" to get an indictment. This statute (18 United States Code Section 1001) makes it a crime to make any "false, fictitious, or fraudulent statement" to any "department or agency of the United States." During the Iran-*contra* hearings, the co-chairman, Senator Daniel Inouye, Democrat of Hawaii, repeatedly referred to this provision as covering false testimony by administration officials to Congress even when they are not under oath. Here again a law whose purpose was to indict tax evaders (for lying on their returns) may be stretched by Walsh in order to prosecute government officials who neither knew that they were committing a crime nor intended to do so.

It is also expected that Walsh will bring criminal charges involving the handling of funds. In doing so, however, he will have to invoke and stretch a number of other sections of the code as well. One is the Anti-Deficiency Act (31 United States Code Section 1341), whose original purpose was to prevent executive officers from committing the government to expenditures beyond what Congress appropriates. According to a General Accounting Office study, "There does not appear to have ever been a prosecution under the criminal provisions of the Anti-Deficiency Act."

Another possibly relevant statute (31 United States Code Section 1301) requires that appropriations be used only for the particular purposes designated by Congress, and not for any other purpose. But no criminal sanction is attached to this law, either. Nor are criminal penalties involved in 31 United States Code Section 3302, requiring "custodians" of public moneys to deposit any excess funds in the Treasury. In any event, the money sent to the *contras* through the diversion was not appropriated by Congress, and it is by no means self-evident that the profits from the arms sales were government property.

Finally, there are the two last resorts of the frustrated prosecutor, perjury and obstruction of justice. If Walsh can find discrepancies among the myriad depositions, congressional hearings, and courtroom testimony, he could bring perjury charges. The problem with perjury is that juries rarely convict anyone of lying about a possible crime if he did not also commit the crime in question. As for obstruction of justice, there was obviously much shredding of documents in Lieutenant Colonel North's office suite. But for this to be a crime, it would have to have occurred after an official criminal investigation had begun, which does not appear to be the case here.

III

Even if the text of the Boland amendments and their legislative history supported the idea that they applied to the White

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House, including the NSC, and even if one or more of the "conspiracy to defraud" statutes, or the laws Congress passed to regulate arms transfers, were truly applicable to the Iran-*contra* affair, there would still be another obstacle to criminal prosecutions here—the Constitution.

The Iran-*contra* panel had a lot to say about how executive-branch officials had "undermined the rule of law" and how failing to inform Congress of all covert operations meant that there was no accountability to "elected officials." But Congress cannot alter the separation of governmental powers set up in the Constitution merely by passing laws (or amendments to continuing resolutions). The Constitution, Supreme Court precedents, and two centuries of practice establish that the President has a wide mandate to pursue the foreign policy of his choice. As Representative John Marshall (later to become Chief Justice of the Supreme Court) told his colleagues in the House in 1800, the Constitution makes the President the "sole organ of the nation in its external relations, and its sole representative with foreign nations."

In contrast, the foreign-policy powers of Congress under the Constitution are limited. The Senate has the advice-and-consent power over treaties and ambassadors. Congress has the power to declare war, though the Founders were careful to give the President the power to *make* war. This is a frequently overlooked distinction. Presidents have involved the nation in hostilities on dozens of occasions, but war has been declared only five times.

The most significant foreign-policy power granted to Congress is the power over the purse. If Congress wishes to end U.S. involvement in a war, it can cut off funding for it. However, the power of the purse is an exceedingly blunt instrument. Congress could, for example, refuse without equivocation to appropriate funds for the *contras*, as the defeated Harkin-Dodd amendments would probably have done. But if, instead of simply withholding appropriations, Congress tries to attach conditions to the spending of authorized funds, such conditions cannot be used to usurp the constitutional authority of the executive branch. This was the lesson of *U.S.* v. *Lovett* (1946). Congress had tried to insert into an omnibus appropriations act a condition that three executive-branch officials, suspected of subversive activities, would be denied salaries. The Supreme Court treated this as an unconstitutional bill of attainder and a usurpation of the President's power to hire and fire his own staff.

The *Lovett* case bears directly on Representative Boland's claim that his amendment prohibited executive-branch officials from helping the *contras* by reason of their receiving federal salaries appropriated by Congress. If Congress could limit the normal activities of any executive-branch official by conditioning his salary, it could make executive policy by using the power of the purse. For example, Congress could use the fact that it appropriates the President's salary to deny him the power to veto its bills.

Nor is *Lovett* the only relevant Supreme Court decision here. Indeed, *U.S.* v. *Curtiss-Wright Export Co.* (1936) raised legal and constitutional issues eerily similar to the questions arising from the Iran-*contra* affair. The defendants were private U.S. citizens who had sold fifteen machine guns to Bolivia, in violation of a presidential proclamation by Franklin D. Roosevelt that no arms be sold to warring nations in the Chaco. A joint resolution of Congress (which, in contrast to the Iran-*contra* situation, agreed with FDR's policy) had established the penalties that could be assessed for violating the proclamation. In upholding the convictions, however, the Supreme Court did not rely on the joint resolution, but instead only on the President's broad powers under the Constitution. Justice George Sutherland wrote for a 7-1 Court that the Constitution gives the executive branch supreme powers in foreign affairs. It is worth citing his opinion at length because *Curtiss-Wright* would be the key precedent in any Iran-*contra* litigation:

> Not only, as we have shown, is the federal power over external affairs in origin and essential character different from that over internal affairs, but participation in the exercise of the power is significantly limited. In this vast external realm, with its important, complicated, delicate, and manifold problems, the President alone has the power to speak or listen as a representative of the nation. He *makes* treaties with the advice and consent of the Senate; but he alone negotiates. . . .
>
> It is important to bear in mind that we are here dealing not alone with an authority vested in the President by an exertion of legislative power, but with such an authority plus the very delicate, plenary, and exclusive power of the President as the sole organ of the federal government in the field of international relations—a power which does not require as a basis for its exercise an act of Congress, but which, of course, like every other governmental power, must be exercised in subordination to the applicable provisions of the Constitution. It is quite apparent that if, in the maintenance of our international relations, embarrassment—perhaps serious embarrassment—is to be avoided and success for our aims achieved, congressional legislation which is to be made effective through negotiation and inquiry within the international field must often accord to the President a degree of discretion and freedom from statutory restriction which would not be admissible were domestic affairs alone involved. . . . This consideration, in connection with what we have already said on the subject, discloses the unwisdom of requiring Congress in this field of governmental power to lay down narrowly de-

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fined standards by which the President is to be governed.

In recent terms, the Supreme Court has invalidated both the legislative veto and certain provisions of the Gramm-Rudman budget law as unconstitutional usurpations by Congress of the President's powers. What may be next are the War Powers Resolution (requiring that troops be withdrawn within sixty days unless Congress acts to authorize the deployment), the intelligence oversight laws (requiring that congressional committees be "fully and currently informed" of intelligence activities), and the Boland amendments. All of these are also very likely unconstitutional infringements by Congress on powers assigned or reserved to the President.

Along with the Constitution and Supreme Court decisions, past practice also supports broad executive-branch authority. Thus, as of 1970, the last time a public accounting was made, Presidents had ordered troops or significant arms abroad 199 times, though (as already noted above) on only five of these occasions did Congress declare war. In 62 cases of non-declared war, Congress had consented to the President's action by appropriating funds, passing resolutions, or by the Senate's having ratified a treaty that envisioned presidential action. On the other 137 occasions—that is, two-thirds of the time—the President acted without any authorization whatsoever by Congress.

In many of these cases, moreover, the President's actions were directly contrary to clear congressional edicts. The most famous example was FDR's decision to violate laws intended to keep the United States neutral in what became World War II. His Attorney General issued an unpersuasive ruling that the transfer of 50 ships to Britain in exchange for naval bases was consistent with the neutrality laws, and while there was a huge controversy, FDR suffered no injury, legal or political, for so clearly defying Congress.

IV

YET even if the laws under which Walsh is seeking convictions should be deemed constitutional, there will remain the question of whether he himself is acting under constitutional authority.

There is very good reason for the view that the office of independent counsel that Congress created to investigate executive-branch officials violates the separation of powers. Unfortunately, Congress gave the role of supervising these prosecutors to a three-judge panel in the District of Columbia, so the lineup on the issue may be two branches to one. Still, the very idea of a prosecutor independent of the executive branch is as constitutionally abhorrent as the courts declaring war or Congress nominating cabinet members.

From time to time, when high-ranking executive officials were accused of breaking the law, Presidents have appointed special prosecutors within the Justice Department, equal in stature with the Attorney General. This system worked quite well for nearly 200 years. Then came Archibald Cox, who in an unprecedented request during Watergate demanded that President Nixon turn over the tapes and sacrifice any notion of executive privilege and presidential immunity. Robert Bork (as acting Attorney General) fired Cox and the President hired another special prosecutor. All this eventually led to the Ethics in Government Act under which a special prosecutor was to be appointed by a three-judge panel whenever the Attorney General found a low threshold of evidence that a high-ranking executive official might have broken a law.

Every President since has expressed doubts as to the constitutionality of this scheme. The argument against the independent counsels is that the Constitution specifies that the President executes the laws and that, accordingly, the prosecutors who help him carry out that mandate must be members of the executive branch; an "independent prosecutor" is thus a constitutional oxymoron. The defense of the independent counsels rests on a clause at the end of Article II, section 2, after the President is given authority over judges, ambassadors, and "all other officers." The clause says: "The Congress may by law vest the appointment of such inferior officers, as they think proper, in the President alone, in the courts of law, or in the heads of departments." Proponents argue that independent counsels are "inferior officers."

At the very least, an "inferior officer" must be inferior to someone. Yet Walsh does not appear to be inferior to anyone, including the President. He ignored established legal rules and State Department precedents on diplomatic immunity when he tried to subpoena a former Israeli official, David Kimche. His plea bargain with Channell and Miller was based on a view of the tax code at odds with all previous executive-branch practice.

Indeed, when Walsh's deputy, Guy Struve, in a hearing last June before a District of Columbia Appeals Court, was asked: "Are you suggesting that your definition of 'inferior officer' does not require an inferior officer to be inferior to anybody?," he replied, "That is what I am suggesting."

There is something especially obnoxious in instructing prosecutors to investigate named individuals with a view toward indicting them. In 1940, many years before the office of the independent counsel was established, Robert Jackson, then Attorney General and later to become a Supreme Court Justice, said that the greatest danger posed by any prosecutor is that "he will pick people that he thinks he should get, rather than pick cases that need to be prosecuted." For "with

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the law books filled with a great assortment of crimes, a prosecutor stands a fair chance of finding at least a technical violation of some act on the part of almost anyone. In such a case, it is not a question of discovering the commission of a crime and then looking for the man who has committed it, it is a question of picking the man and then searching the law books, or putting investigators to work to pin some offense on him." Worst of all, Jackson concluded, is when the "real crime becomes that of being unpopular with the predominant or governing group, being attached to the wrong political views, or being personally obnoxious to or in the way of the prosecutor himself."

Lawrence Walsh, ultimately empowered by a Congress whose majority strongly opposes the politics of the President and his foreign policies especially, is this dangerous prosecutor writ large.

And so it is that we now have what Oliver North denounced in his opening statement to the Iran-*contra* panel as the "mind-boggling" attempt "to criminalize policy differences between co-equal branches of government and the executive's conduct of foreign policy." This ugly new feature of our political life (reinforced by prosecutorial congressional hearings and by what Leonard Garment* calls "prosecutorial politics" in general) makes it unlikely that any President soon will dare exercise to the full the authority to conduct foreign policy that the Constitution places in him. Indeed, criminalizing policy differences guarantees cowardice and even paralysis in the executive branch as a whole. Because no other branch of government, certainly not Congress, can step into this breach, our enemies have good reason to be delighted, and our friends to be frightened and horrified.

* "The Guns of Watergate," COMMENTARY, April 1987.

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Resurrecting the New Left

Scott McConnell

WRAPPED within the current boom in 60's rock-and-roll, and within the more elusive nostalgia for a time when drugs and promiscuous sex seemed there to be enjoyed without consequence, lies a movement to bring about a resurrection of the 60's in their specifically political aspect. The movement finds more or less innocent expression in the efforts of Democratic presidential hopefuls to claim for themselves the spirit of John F. Kennedy. But there are signs of another, more radical, and possibly more consequential political recapitulation, whose spirit is caught not by the New Frontier but in the return to campus of aging former leaders of the New Left. While this phenomenon obviously represents an effort to revive the radicalism of the 60's, it has also found support in pockets of mainstream liberalism.

Thus to the growing pile of recent memoirs and anthologies celebrating the radical movements of that decade—and of such mass-market books as *Do You Believe in Magic?** and *It Was Twenty Years Ago Today*—can now be added three sympathetic histories of the New Left. These works all concentrate on the New Left's early period, and particularly on the first years of its flagship organization, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), and on the politics which led, in the summer of 1962, to the drafting of the manifesto of the New Left, the Port Huron Statement.

It is not hard to see why there should be so much interest in early SDS. At first glance, it seems the perfect avatar of an indigenous American radicalism, nonideological and unspoiled by the intolerance which later came to dominate SDS itself and the New Left in general. To anyone wishing to contemplate how a radical movement with a considerable mass base can spring quickly and forcefully out of a seemingly quiescent political era (like the 1950's), SDS is a tactical inspiration as well. In short, as past memory or as future model, Port Huron represents, *mutatis mutandis*, something like the Russian Revolution before Stalin, or even before Kronstadt.

In a passage that is likely to set the standard for dewy-eyed invocations of the idealistic spirit of Port Huron, Hendrik Hertzberg, the former editor of the *New Republic* (and speechwriter for Jimmy Carter), has recently written:

> In those pre-Beatles, pre-acid days, they could have passed for the executive board of the Young Republicans or the Young Democrats. But theirs was not a politics of parties, nor of candidates, nor even of issues. It was a politics of vision and values. They talked about civil rights and foreign policy and welfare and education, but the questions that underlay their discussion were bigger ones: What makes for a meaningful life? What is a good society? How can the world be remade? At 5 o'clock in the morning of June 16, 1962, after four days of intense talk, of cutting and pasting and very little sleep, they ratified their text and walked wearily out into the damp rosy dawn, knowing they had done something important. Some of them held hands on the shore of the lake, and felt exalted.

These words come from Hertzberg's glowing New York *Times* review of James Miller's *Democracy Is in the Streets: From Port Huron to the Siege of Chicago*.† Now a *Newsweek* writer, Miller during the late 60's was a member of the small anarchist faction within SDS that later grew dismayed by the organization's turn to a Marxism violent in word and deed. In this work, which is in most respects the least significant of the three under consideration here, he says that he was pulled to his subject by a desire to uncover what was inspiring about "America's last great experiment with democratic idealism" and to stand it against "Ronald Reagan's era of cultural retrenchment and expansive jingoism."

IN PURSUIT of this objective, Miller provides a microscopic examination of the factors that led several of the Port Huron drafters to get involved with SDS. He has extensively interviewed not only Tom Hayden, the document's principal author, but several less prominent figures; he duly notes the pervasive influence of the left-wing sociologist C. Wright Mills; he describes the effect of the emotions generated by the early civil-rights movement; he has pored over the records of the vari-

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* Reviewed in COMMENTARY by Tod Lindberg, May 1987.
† Simon & Schuster, 431 pp., $19.95.

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ous drafts of the statement, and dwells lovingly on its sonorous preamble ("We are people of this generation, bred in at least modest comfort, housed now in universities, looking uncomfortably to the world we inherit"); he makes a stab at saying something comprehensible about the statement's proposal for "participatory democracy"—though he is finally unable to do anything more with this idea than SDS itself managed during its short life. But Miller fails to deal satisfactorily with the central historical question about SDS, which is how a movement that seemed so promising at its inception managed, in a period of about six years, to recapitulate the entire moral history of Western socialism, from the utopians to Stalinism. Put succinctly the question is, to what extent was the shape of the fully grown New Left prefigured by the New Left in embryo?

Plausible answers to this question are scattered throughout Miller's material, but he seems curiously reluctant to grapple with them. The single sharply contested issue at Port Huron concerned the stance of SDS toward Communists, both in the United States and abroad. In 1962, SDS was still the nearly dormant youth affiliate of the League for Industrial Democracy (LID), a socialist organization under the tutelage of Norman Thomas whose members for the better part of the century had been engaged, with limited success, in hand-to-hand combat with the American Communist party for leadership of the American Left. To some if not all the young people who gathered at Port Huron, those battles were deadwood from the past, of no concern to their effort to generate a revitalized Left. More, they saw in American anti-Communism an attempt to divert the country from progressive renewal, and therefore they condemned it.

Michael Harrington, then the youngest of the old socialists, was also present at Port Huron, as were some of his political associates from the Young People's Socialist League (YPSL). Harrington and colleagues stayed up late into the night arguing with as much force as they could muster that a manifesto of an organization purporting to inspire a renewed democratic Left must be anti-Communist both in word and spirit. He was humored by the addition of several clauses, so that in its final form the Port Huron Statement condemned Communism with nearly as much energy as it condemned anti-Communism.

Miller presents Harrington and his YPSL allies as dogmatists and ideologues, mired in the irrelevant quarrels of the past; he is abetted in this exercise by the present-day Michael Harrington, who now views his own behavior at Port Huron as excessive. In any case, the anti-anti-Communism which was the animating tone of the statement proved extremely irritating to the board of the LID, and resulted in a nasty divorce between SDS and its parent organization—a divorce which became part of the folklore of the early New Left.

Whether such wounds would have healed in time is doubtful; but as it was, they were reopened the next year, when Tom Hayden and other SDS leaders met with the editorial board of the democratic-socialist quarterly *Dissent*. Irving Howe, the editor of *Dissent*, has since written twice about the encounter; both times he has stressed how put off he was by Hayden's enthusiasm for Fidel Castro, by his tendency to contrast the ideal of "participatory democracy" with the inadequate version practiced in the United States, and by much else. After the meeting, Howe has related, the old socialists gathered around the table commented all at once that in Hayden's "clenched style—that air of distance suggesting reserves of power—one could already see the beginnings of a commissar." Two months after the *Dissent* meeting, at the 1963 National Council meeting of SDS, a warm ovation was given to an outsider who had been observing the proceedings—Alger Hiss.

In Miller's account the rupture between SDS and the democratic socialists remains something of an enigma. There were no explicit political issues on which the two sides disagreed. The socialists were at one with SDS in condemning what they viewed as the Kennedy administration's go-slow policy on civil rights; they were at one in wanting the United States to cease atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons and to be more forthcoming in the search for an arms-control agreement; they were at one in seeking to break the grip of the conservative Southern "Dixiecrats" on the Democratic party, and to move the party leftward. Given all this, why should the anti-Stalinism of the LID and of the editors of *Dissent* have proved a pill which the fledgling student organization found impossible to swallow?

Miller fails to answer this question, but light is shed on it from other quarters. Both Maurice Isserman's *If I Had a Hammer: The Death of the Old Left and the Birth of the New Left** and Todd Gitlin's *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage*† provide a psychological and political context which makes the split less difficult to fathom.

LIKE Miller, Isserman is a former member of SDS who wants to rehabilitate the political 60's and to counter the notion that it was a "time of bizarre and even sinister maladjustment, thankfully put behind us." He is also one of a coterie of young historians, formerly of the New Left, who have taken the American Communist party (CP) as their principal area of inquiry. In previous work Isserman has sought to illuminate the ways in which the CP functioned as an integral part of an indigenous American radicalism; for him, the fact that the party leadership took its political directives from Moscow is considerably less salient than was its participa-

* Basic Books, 288 pp., $18.95.
† Bantam Books, 512 pp., $24.95.

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tion in the day-to-day struggles of broader American social movements. Such a perspective may not be a useful lens through which to analyze the CP, but it does clarify something about the New Left at Port Huron that up to now has remained obscure.

What Isserman provides, and Miller does not, is a panorama of the broad culture of the American Left at the time of Port Huron, the soil in which the young SDS plant sank its first roots. In Isserman's account, that ground was largely staked out by the men and women who had left the CP during the 1950's, either out of fear of government repression or because their beliefs had been shaken by Khrushchev's revelations of the crimes committed by Stalin, or more generally because they no longer found the party an effective vehicle for the advancement of their political goals. The CP, which in 1956 had 20,000 members, mostly middle-class professionals, lost over 15,000 of them in the next two years.

Although Isserman has little enlightening to say about the political beliefs of these people, they do form a type about which generalization is possible. It is important to recognize that most of them did not abandon the core beliefs which attracted them to the party in the first place, and which had been reinforced by years of party activity. Certainly many of them thought that the American Communist party had been poorly led. Some regretted the party directives which had, during the McCarthy era, ordered many leading members underground, shattering their careers and personal lives. Others found much to criticize in the party's exuberant embrace of Stalinism, particularly now that it had been demonstrated how vicious Stalin had been to other Communists. Many undoubtedly felt sheepish over their own personal admiration of Stalin, not to mention their own failure to perceive the anti-Semitism that lay behind such affairs as the Slansky trial and the so-called "doctors' plot."

But for a great many (the majority?) of those who left during this period, abandoning the party did not mean abandoning Marxism-Leninism. They became avid readers of such independent Marxist-Leninist journals as the *National Guardian* and *Monthly Review*. The United States, they continued to feel, was the world's main bastion of reaction and imperialism. "Bourgeois" liberties were a fraud which masked the domination of the poor by the exploitative forces of monopoly capital. The collapse of capitalism, in any case inevitable, was much to be desired. As for the Soviet Union, although no longer willing to give automatic approval to every turn in its foreign policy, the class-of-'56 ex-Communists continued to support those causes and countries in the world which they deemed "progressive" and "anti-imperialist." More often than not, this translated into support for the very same causes and countries the Soviet Union was supporting.

This "party" of ex-Communists is described by Isserman as the "most influential adult radical group in the 1960's." One avenue by which it left its prints upon the newer radicalism then emerging was caught by Irving Howe in a 1965 article in *Dissent* analyzing the political beliefs of the New Left:

> Those who left the party or its supporting organizations because they feared government attack were often people who kept, semi-privately, their earlier convictions. Many of them had a good deal of political experience; some remained significantly placed in the network of what might be called conscience organizations. Naturally enough, they continued to keep in touch with one another, forming a kind of reserve apparatus based on common opinions, feelings, memories. As soon as some ferment began a few years ago in the civil-rights movement and the peace groups, these people were present, ready and eager; they needed no directives from the CP to which, in any case, they no longer (or may never have) belonged; they were quite capable of working on their own as if they were working together. Organizational Stalinism declined, but a good part of its heritage remained: people who could offer political advice, raise money, write leaflets, sit patiently at meetings. . . .

IT IS very difficult to gauge the precise extent of the influence this "adult" group exercised on the general tenor of SDS. But many SDS members did indeed come to Port Huron by way of such "conscience" organizations as SANE, or Women Strike for Peace, or from those pockets within the civil-rights movement dominated by the perspectives, and often also the personnel, of Isserman's "party" of ex-Communists. Another group which counted both at Port Huron and after was the so-called "red-diaper babies"—children of people who had recently left the CP, or in some cases children of people who had remained in it. Many of these young men and women had grown up in the CP network of summer camps and political clubs; on the surface they sometimes seemed like part of the "silent generation" of the 50's, but their "silence" was of a particularly sophisticated kind, and any group on the Left which hoped to organize the young had to attend to them.

In this connection, Isserman quotes from a fascinating memorandum by Al Haber, the non-Communist student radical who was a pre-Port Huron president of SDS, explaining to his parent organization, the LID, that while the CP itself was dead on campus, it was vital for SDS to attract students from Stalinist backgrounds; if SDS did not, others would. Haber went on to say of these students that although generally suspicious of ideology, they bristled at any criticism of the Soviet Union. SDS, therefore, should strive for a political tone which would attract the red-diaper babies while at the same time fending off any slide toward "anti-American" and "anti-demo-

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cratic" attitudes within the organization. In the event, SDS would score a much greater success at attracting students from Communist backgrounds than at inoculating itself against anti-American and anti-democratic attitudes.

Isserman's book tails off into an attack on the Young People's Socialist League which seems scurrilous and is unsupported by documentation. The virulence of the attack may have something to do with the fact that YPSL, the loser in early factional wars at SDS, came to oppose the New Left in its later incarnations, and perhaps also with the fact that several former YPSL members have become neoconservatives.

In spite of this flaw, however, Isserman's work makes it possible to understand how the anti-Communists lost so quickly and so decisively in the maneuverings which determined the early shape of SDS. It is an essential corrective to the view of the early SDS common throughout much of the 60's and now reemerging from the likes of Miller and Hendrik Hertzberg—namely, that it was an organization of idealistic and politically inexperienced college students focused mainly on advancing the cause of civil rights, bringing an end to the cold war, and transcending a culture whose parameters seemed defined by *Leave It to Beaver* and Wonder Bread. In Isserman one finds everything left out of Hertzberg's portrayal of Port Huron as a coming-together of young men and women who "could have passed for the executive board of the Young Republicans or the Young Democrats," everything necessary to make sense of the information in Miller's book that he himself refuses to interpret.

As it happens, of the six or eight people who played leading roles in the forging of the Port Huron Statement, and in setting the tone of the organization in its first years, several could hardly be mistaken for typical "Young Democrats" and "Young Republicans." One, Richard Flacks (though he had in fact served as president of the Young Democrats at Brooklyn College), had been an activist in the Communist youth organization, the Labor Youth League. His wife, like him a red-diaper baby, was an activist in Women Strike for Peace. A third, Steve Max, was the son of the former editor of the *Daily Worker*.

This is not to suggest that, at Port Huron or after, any of these had an enduring association with the CP. Flacks, for instance, came to Port Huron as a correspondent for the *National Guardian*, a Marxist-Leninist publication explicitly independent of the CP. But they were certainly happy to find an organization that was opposed to anti-Communism. And in the young Tom Hayden, a Midwesterner from a Catholic background who was already a seminal force at the age of twenty, they discovered someone who could convey radical disapproval of capitalist America and still "speak American"—that is, use a language that owed nothing to the formulations of American Stalinism. Flacks perceived this instantly; when he first heard Hayden speak, in the spring of 1962, he rushed home to tell his wife, "I've just seen the next Lenin."

PERSONAL testimony backing up Isserman's account of the considerable power wielded by the allegedly dormant CP, particularly in New York in the late 1950's, comes from Todd Gitlin in *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage*. Like Miller and Isserman, Gitlin too was a member of SDS—indeed, he was elected president of the organization in 1963, shared an apartment with Tom Hayden, and was present at several key encounters such as the hostile meeting with the editors of *Dissent* described above. Later he visited and enthused over Cuba, and remained a radical activist throughout the decade. Again like Miller and Isserman, he too sees the 60's as a positive influence on American life, and he concludes his book in a decidedly partisan mode, lamenting the post-Carter conservative trend in American politics. Within the confines of this perspective, however, Gitlin has produced an impressive blend of memoir and history which is likely to disappoint anyone expecting a rosy-hued portrait of the 60's as an era of youthful idealism snuffed out by the repressive "system."

Gitlin himself came from a liberal middle-class family, and he is particularly deft at portraying the milestones along the way of his own radicalization during the late 1950's. In his telling, the CP held, for him and for many others like him, a sort of mystique of the forbidden. He elaborates on his first love affair with a red-diaper baby (such affairs, he suggests, were important milestones for many young men who joined the New Left), and of the secret thrill of listening to *The Investigator*, an underground record satirizing McCarthy. (Vignettes like this serve to demonstrate once again how counterproductive it was for American politics that the Communist party was driven underground in the 50's.) To a greater extent than Miller, Gitlin emphasizes the importance of the organization's split with the democratic socialists.

Gitlin's book is particularly useful for tracing the growth of SDS into a mass organization during the mid-to-late 60's. He notes that the first sign of a large constituency for resurgent radicalism came at Berkeley in 1964, during the so-called Free Speech Movement, which preceded the emergence of Vietnam as a mobilizing issue even as it set the tone for it.

The next year, cadres from the Progressive Labor party (PL) first showed up at the SDS convention. PL was a Maoist offshoot of the CP, unusual on the Left at that time both because it was openly and explicitly Marxist-Leninist and because in the tradition of the old CP it was an organization of disciplined cadres. In many accounts of the New Left's demise, PL is assigned the role of the heavy. But as Gitlin makes painfully clear, before PL's entry, SDS had already

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taken care to strip itself of any possible defense against it. Having defined itself as vigorously opposed to anti-Communism, SDS had no logical reason to resist the entry of PL cadres into its ranks. At the 1965 convention, SDS president Clark Kissinger took care of the details by proposing two amendments: the first eliminated the phrasing in the SDS constitution which defined the organization as a "democratic" movement equally against "Communism" and the "domestic Right"; the second excised the SDS exclusion clause, which had prohibited membership by advocates of "totalitarian" principles. These amendments, opposed by a feeble remnant from the Young People's Socialist League and few others, were debated little, and passed without difficulty.

This evolution from anti-anti-Communism to pro-Communism did not at all stand in the way of the growth of SDS, now accelerating as college students in increasing numbers took notice of an organization which represented their opposition to the escalating Vietnam war. In the three years after 1965, SDS and the broader New Left went from one astonishing success to another. Membership soared: by 1968 there may have been 100,000 SDSers and the organization had become the largest radical group in America since the 1930's. The broader "Movement," as it came to be called, incorporating a loose alliance of the New Left, militant blacks, and a sympathetic network of middle-aged and more established veterans of the Old Left, created its chief bastions in and around college campuses on both coasts. The Movement swam in the sea of the much larger counterculture of "the kids"—a worldwide youth movement centered on the enjoyment of drugs and rock-and-roll, and a disdain for the restrictive "straight" world of the nuclear family and professional ambition. As a whole, the Movement benefited from the support of a wide range of American intellectuals, which manifested itself in sympathetic efforts to interpret "what the kids are trying to tell us" and, just as often, in expressions of unrestrained enthusiasm and even sycophancy.

THERE were, however, hidden tensions between the revolutionary core and the larger mass of young people who opposed the war but were not ready to try to destroy the American government. In the Movement's inner sanctums these students were called, in a revealing mimicry of a right-wing epithet, "peace creeps"—they had not yet fully internalized the New Left's hatred of the malignant American "system," and they were in danger of being drawn into that system by the 1968 presidential campaigns of Bobby Kennedy and Eugene McCarthy.

To be sure, some of the Movement's leaders themselves retained a certain ambivalence toward liberalism: when Tom Hayden, who had privately referred to Bobby Kennedy as "a little fascist," showed up respectfully at his funeral, that ambivalence was probably as much at work in him as was the instinct for media opportunities. But generally liberalism was viewed as the Movement's worst enemy. Theories of "liberal fascism" proliferated, direct descendants of the Stalinist concept of "social fascism" mixed with gibberish derived from Herbert Marcuse about "repressive tolerance."

The Movement also mastered the tactics of confrontation on the campuses, learning to find obscure or secondary issues as rationales to seize buildings and shout down professors and then, if the university tried to restore order, creating scenes with the police, which helped further to strengthen it. It was not long before such early rallying cries as "participatory democracy" and "free speech" had acquired Orwellian definition: by 1968 the circle of Americans deemed unfit to participate, or to speak, had widened to include any professor opposing campus disruption, any official of the U.S. government, anyone on a campus who supported the right of a student to inquire about jobs with the military, the government, or Dow Chemical (because it was the manufacturer of the napalm being used in Vietnam).

To an extent that hardly anyone could have foreseen, all this was overwhelmingly effective. On one campus after another the Movement grew not only in numbers but in moral authority. While the violence of language and of tactics was sometimes deplored, it was difficult to quarrel with success; many were the students and professors who worried that in its means the Movement might have gone too far, but who nevertheless "agreed with its aims."

But what, finally, were those aims? Ending the war in Vietnam was of course the one most often stated, the most readily understood. But the Movement had a deeper ambition. By no later than 1965, SDS had concluded that whatever had been so mysteriously disturbing to it about America at Port Huron could now be described in a familiar term like "imperialism," a disease which could be alleviated only through "radical social change" or, simply put, through revolution. By the mid-60's, the Movement's leaders were traveling to Cuba and North Vietnam, some lending their voices to North Vietnamese propaganda, some simply forging emotional ties with these Communist regimes, some cooperating with their intelligence agencies. By then it was obvious that the New Left's commonly expressed condescension toward the Old Left had nothing at all to do with the CP's unrestrained enthusiasm for dictatorship, but simply implied contempt for the fact that the Old Left had failed to win power and that its aging members had retreated to a kind of checkbook radicalism. Within the New Left the feeling grew that revolution was both a possibility and a moral imperative, and its leaders began to consider strategies which would lead them to victory.

Gitlin is at his best here in describing the frenetic atmosphere in the New Left as it was fed by

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one victory after another—the camaraderie with Castroism and "the Vietnamese," the heady feeling that one was involved in a global process that was on the threshold of triumph. One problem remained, however. Successful as the Movement had been in controlling the terms of debate and intimidating its opponents on about twenty major college campuses, it was both tiny and increasingly detested within the nation at large. Giddy with a sense of its own achievements yet dimly conscious of the disdain in which it was held by most Americans, the New Left embarked on a search for classes and social movements possessing revolutionary potential. Both classical Marxism and the Old Left had assigned this role to the working class, and PL, by 1968 a major power within SDS, still believed in it. But in the U.S. (as elsewhere) the workers had never shown much interest; during the 60's, no group in America was more contemptuous of the New Left. So the search went on for a substitute "proletariat."

One possibility was youth—the millions of teenagers and older hippies who participated in the counterculture. "Yippie" leaders Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin, two politically experienced "freaks," well-known through their media antics and adept at giving political expression to counterculture attitudes, were the most prominent partisans of this line. Hoffman's 1969 book *Woodstock Nation*, published as he was about to be tried for inciting riot at the 1968 Democratic convention, exhorted America's youth to reject the "PIG NATION" of their parents, and introduced a new set of distinctions among styles of radicalism:

> When I appear in the Chicago courtroom, I want to be tried not because I support the National Liberation Front of Vietnam—which I do—but because I have long hair. Not because I support the Black Liberation Movement, but because I smoke dope. Not because I am against the capitalist system, but because I think property eats shit. Not because I believe in student power, but that the schools should be destroyed. Not because I'm against corporate liberalism, but because I think people should do whatever the fuck they want, and not because I'm trying to organize the working class, but because I think kids should kill their parents.

But while the Yippies enjoyed a large following, the intellectuals of the New Left viewed the undisciplined and basically anarchist counterculture with considerable unease. Many of them looked instead for the substitute proletariat in the Black Panthers and other "Third World revolutionaries," armed political groups whose members were usually recruited in the prison system. Out of this admiration for those who were "picking up the gun" came the underground terrorist offshoot from SDS known as Weatherman.

IT HAS become customary, among latter-day apologists for the New Left, to treat Weatherman as an aberration—a temporary and alien insanity inexplicably visited upon the idealistic "kids." Gitlin's incisive demonstration of how the Weatherman choice flowed logically and inexorably from the Movement's own perspectives is a necessary antidote to this fiction.

It was Weatherman that perceived that cheering for armed Third World revolutionaries from the sidelines had a hollow ring. It was Weatherman that sensed the hypocrisy of relying on the Black Panthers, then in the midst of discovering that the police had more firepower than they did. And it was Weatherman that saw through the fantasy of the youth culture, which was enjoying itself too much to think of political action. "The duty of revolutionaries is to make revolution," as the saying goes, and Weatherman appointed itself not only the vanguard but the agent of revolution.

At the famous national conference of SDS in 1969, Weatherman and its allies expelled PL for being "objectively anti-Communist" (*sic*) and then marched out, 700 strong, chanting "victory to people's war," determined to put into practice a moral and political perspective that the Movement had been nurturing for years.

As Gitlin relates, Weatherman contained many of the brightest and most charismatic figures within SDS, indeed within the whole New Left: articulate, good-looking, graduates of elite universities, products (like other revolutionaries who have succeeded in our hemisphere) of upper-class homes. In contrast to Progressive Labor, Weatherman had style and sported a faintly self-mocking sense of humor. Like the early SDS, it too "spoke American": members liked to sing, to the tune of *White Christmas*, "I'm dreaming of a white riot," and, from the opening song in *West Side Story*, "When you're a red, you're a red all the way, from your first party cell till your class takes the state." They were well-known to many others in the Movement; some had been organizers in poor neighborhoods, others had been campus radicals who had not only participated in disturbances but had planned and led them. Many were accomplished public speakers, and were practiced in dealing with the straight media. They were, in effect, Movement stars, and when in 1969 they went underground and began to riot and bomb in earnest, the rest of the Left looked on with a certain alarm but also with awe and fascination.

Leninism had been commonplace in SDS since about 1967. It was after all a natural ideology for the SDS elite, for it spoke to the Movement's grudging awareness of its unpopularity once one got away from its enclaves in Berkeley, Ann Arbor, and the Upper West Side of New York, and it provided a rationale for that unpopularity as well as a justification for a vanguard party. But Weatherman also absorbed the newer styles of revolutionary thought, such as that developed by Frantz Fanon, the popular theorist of Third World revolution. Fanon stressed the liberating effect of violence on the psyche of those who

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perpetrated it. For Weatherman this proved a way to break the psychic bonds of "white skin privilege." Weatherman leader Mark Rudd expressed it this way: "It's a wonderful feeling to hurt a pig; it must be a really wonderful feeling to kill a pig or blow up a building."

The denouement came quickly. There were, inspired or carried out by Weatherman, over 250 bombings between September 1969 and May 1970. The climax occurred in a New York town house in March 1970, when an anti-personnel bomb studded with roofing nails, apparently intended for Columbia University, blew up before it could be placed at its destination. Three of the Weatherman vanguard died, others staggered out of the rubble and, for a time, disappeared. This marked the symbolic close of the venture begun at Port Huron. Shortly thereafter a rock-and-roll festival at Altamont turned into a death dance, closing down the fantasy of the hip counterculture.

POLITICAL defeats in American life are seldom final. Those members of Weatherman who resurfaced in the late 1970's received gentle wrist pats from the judiciary, as did Abbie Hoffman, who had been caught selling cocaine. More recently Mark Rudd returned from Nicaragua to Columbia University, his alma mater, and announced that he no longer felt power was a "realistic short-term goal." The event provided material for a pleasant nostalgia story in the press. So too did Abbie Hoffman's return to "direct action," this time in league with Amy Carter, as they led a group trying to prevent students at the University of Massachusetts from talking to CIA recruiting officers. The timing seemed uncanny: Ronald Reagan drifts into political senescence and the 60's spring back to life.

But the reaction to these latest events, particularly among established liberal opinion leaders, suggests that something besides nostalgia is in the air. Mary McGrory of the Washington *Post* took the occasion of the Abbie-Amy action to denounce the "galloping apathy of campus youth" and to acclaim "at last a committed college student." This is by now a commonplace theme: one would not be surprised by a call for congressional hearings to investigate campus complacency. Miss McGrory and her colleagues have even refused to be consoled by the long list of public figures—Caspar Weinberger, Henry Kissinger, Jeane Kirkpatrick, Edén Pastora, among them—who have been effectively barred from speaking on campus by the staged disruptions of today's college Left.

Of course it is hardly among liberals alone that one senses a palpable hunger for a new generation of radicals. The ecumenically socialist *In These Times* and the Communist *Political Affairs* have both published articles hailing the revival of left-wing student activism, although in each case the information contained within has been rather sparse. In a recent talk celebrating the old CP, Richard Flacks, once a significant figure in bridging the Old Left to the New, digressed to announce that in the 90's, the children of the 60's radicals would give the Left the same sort of boost that his own generation of red-diaper babies had provided thirty years before. It is a plausible hypothesis.

This yearning for a new generation of leftists, misty among liberals, more focused on the Left, may account for the astonishing response earlier this year to the death in Nicaragua of Benjamin Linder, one of thousands of young Americans who have served the Sandinista regime. A "true American idealist" is how the Washington *Post Magazine* referred to Linder in its cover story on him; elsewhere he was described as a "peace-corps type," and (by *Post* columnist Richard Cohen) as a "dreamer trying to bring a little light to a dark corner of the world." One had to search more diligently to find that before going to Nicaragua Linder had been a founder of the University of Washington chapter of CISPES, an organization developed through consultations of the Communist parties of the United States and El Salvador to build American support for a Communist victory in the latter country; his family had a long history of activism in Old Left organizations.

It may be that those celebrating Linder's kind of commitment are on to something about the coming shape of the Left. There is already much rustling about the "sandalistas" as a cadre for a revived radicalism, and a book called *Yankee Sandinistas** profiles a handful of them. Paul Rice, a former student at Yale, identified by the *Village Voice* as Linder's best friend, may be the most dynamic. Beginning in the 1970's with the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee (whose chairman was Michael Harrington), he moved steadily leftward. First he traveled to China, but was deeply disappointed with the tentative liberalization process then under way and regretted the drift from hard-core Maoism. By the time he returned to the United States, convinced that China was betraying the masses, the cause of Nicaragua beckoned him southward. There he now lives; he serves on the block committees, engages in "economic research" for the Sandinista government, and undergoes military training, looking forward to the defeat of the *contras* so he can return home to "fight imperialism."

FROM an initial flirtation with moderate socialism, to the embrace of ever more uncompromising versions of Third World Marxism-Leninism, Rice's path is strikingly reminiscent of the 60's. Whether his is the kind of stance that will dominate "the next Left" as thoroughly as it did the last two is an interesting question. Two recent books, representing distinct and even opposing visions of the future of the American Left, may help answer that question, as

* By Ron Ridenour, Curbstone Books, 160 pp., $9.95 (paper).

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much in how they have been received as in what they say.

Michael Harrington's *The Next Left** is infused, like all his work, with a dogged faith that history is on the side of democratic socialism, and it offers a number of reformist proposals to help history reach that goal. It says volumes about today's Left, however, that Harrington's book has been received in its precincts with polite yawns—this, despite the fact that in recent years as the co-chairman of Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) he has learned to soft-pedal the fierce anti-Stalinism which led him to cross swords with the New Left at Port Huron twenty-five years ago. (Indeed, a recent DSA forum on American foreign policy featured Harrington flanked by representatives of the Sandinistas and the African National Congress, neither group known for its commitment to democratic socialism.) Harrington may still be interested in socialist strategies to stem the collapse of the American rustbelt and to promote greater equality, but on today's Left, the energy flows into causes like "anti-imperialism," which are about something else altogether.

Just what they are about is given muscular theoretical exposition in Mike Davis's *Prisoners of the American Dream*,† a book that is in part a polemic against Harrington and the strategy of trying to build a socialist rump within the Democratic party. In those journals of the far Left that are read by liberals, such as the *Nation* and the *Village Voice*, Davis's book (unlike Harrington's) has been greeted alternately with deferential disagreement and wild enthusiasm.

Davis describes himself as "fairly typical of the cohort of the 1960's New Left: first immersion in the mass civil-rights movement (CORE), followed by antiwar work (SDS and Communist party), then by a considerable stint within the trade-union opposition." Actually, the Communist-party interlude is hardly typical, but the early chapters of his book are intended to support a proposition that SDS intuited twenty-five years ago: the American industrial working class cannot be relied upon by the Left as an agent of revolution. Davis, however, has gone beyond this insight to arrive at a position essentially similar to that of Weatherman before it went underground. The centerpiece of that position involves a prospective alliance of non-white Americans and Third World revolutionaries, all taking their marching orders from white Leninists.

To be sure, the dream of a black "vanguard" is not a new one; it was popular in both Old and New Left circles during the 60's. But the rise in America's Hispanic population has given it a fresh twist: the "real weak link in the domestic base of American imperialism," Davis proclaims, "is a black and Hispanic working class, fifty million strong. This is the nation within a nation, society within a society, that alone possesses the numerical and positional strength to undermine the American empire from within." In tandem with the Communist resurgence in Central America, this "nation within a nation" can act to bring "socialism" to North America "by virtue of a combined hemispheric process of revolt that overlaps boundaries and interlaces movements."

Davis admits that there are difficulties with his scenario. A big one is the "weakness of any national black (or Hispanic) socialist cadre." Yet he does offer the far Left a comprehensive strategy which it has not had since the New Left's collapse (as well as a theoretical basis for support of Jesse Jackson's presidential campaign, the single electoral movement for which Davis evinces any enthusiasm).

THUS far there is no sign of a rise in the memberships of left-wing organizations, and no reason to think that a decisive bloc of the American people would be interested in the kind of "radical social change" entertained by the far Left. On the other hand, there was also little sign in the early 60's that a movement like the New Left would assume the mass proportions that it did, and such symptoms as there were (primarily, the numbers of young people attracted to the civil-rights movement) have their counterparts today in the energies mobilized around the cause of disarmament or the campaigns to protest American policy in Central America and toward South Africa. Moreover, the American Left now has much greater influence at the centers of power than it did during the early 60's, when there was nothing in Washington to rival today's small rump of Congressmen who raise money for and give political legitimacy to groups supporting the Communist insurgency in El Salvador and the Communist government in Nicaragua.

The Left could also benefit from the possibility, still very latent, of a generational change of climate. It has been noted (by Robert Nisbet) that boredom is a powerful and underestimated factor in creating the conditions for social upheaval; the chances that a new generation will be attracted to the spirit of the 60's simply because it was a time of confrontation and excitement cannot be considered low. Nor, given the proclivity of so many shapers of opinion to equate youthful idealism with service to left-wing causes, should we be surprised if any new generational ferment is channeled in a leftist direction. If so, there is every reason to expect that its ideological trajectory will follow the same path, from the lofty rhetoric of idealism to the murderous politics of Leninism, that was traced by the radicals of the 60's, over whom so much nostalgic sentiment is now being expressed.

* Reviewed in COMMENTARY by Larry D. Nachman, August 1987.

† Verso, 320 pp., $24.95.

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Pagans, Christians, Jews

Chaim Raphael

WHEN, as a schoolboy in England many years ago, I learned of the statement by W.R. Inge, Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral, that his Christian faith owed much more to the Greeks than to the Jews, I could not have been more surprised. As a youngster of Orthodox Jewish background growing up in a small northern town I had been trying to find my own balance within the Christian ambience of England, and up until then I had rather luxuriated in the consolation that however much the Gentiles might dislike us, they had to accept the fact that their own origins lay in Judaism. How, I wondered in some consternation, could an eminent Christian divine ignore the obvious source of his own religion?

And how could he identify with the Greeks? The Greek world we met in schoolbooks was certainly enjoyable in its own way. In the foreground it offered a panorama of mythical adventures linked to the marvels of nature; beyond this, we had learned about the distinction of the Greeks in philosophy, drama, and science. But to consider that this carefree ancient world, a world in which issues of faith seemed irrelevant, might be the real source of Church worship was for me altogether bizarre.

There was an additional problem that bothered me. I had always assumed that the undying hostility between Jews and Christians revolved around the question of Jewish responsibility for the crucifixion of Jesus. Now scholars could show, I believed, that this was not really the Jews' fault, and thus eventually there might be a hope of reconciliation; but if Christianity had some kind of Greek affinity, its difference with Judaism was never going to be bridged. The Greeks projected in their worship a world controlled by multiple gods of nature. If the ancient Hebrews entertained some such view in primitive times, they had long left it behind. Not only does the Bible deride any tendency to think of the forces of nature in personal terms, or to worship their projection in images of wood and stone, it regards naturism as an impediment to the moral life, which is itself man's whole purpose on earth. The Jews saw this central purpose reflected in a single power—their God—who in His singleness expressed the infrangible unity of existence. Paganism was thus a sin both against reason and against God, two sides of the same coin.

The resistance to paganism, set out on every page of the Bible, became deeply implanted in Jewish consciousness throughout all successive generations. When an "oppressor" tried to force even a merely formal type of pagan worship on the Jews, distaste could lead to war. The most compelling illustration was the story of the Maccabees, where the oppressors, as we learned in Hebrew school, were, specifically, "the Greeks." If today's Christians identified with these same pagan Greeks, what did this say about the religious nature of Christianity itself? At the very least one needed to know a good deal more about the pagan background in order to begin to answer that question.

Inquiry into the pagan background has, indeed, progressed apace in recent times, and with ramifications far beyond those raised by Dean Inge in his short essay on the subject (published in *The Legacy of Greece*, 1921). To be sure, modern scholarship still occupies itself in a major way with the links between early Christianity and Judaism, intensified now through the revelations of the Dead Sea Scrolls. But research into the pagan background is inevitably wider in range, taking in the world beyond the confines of Palestine, and endlessly original in character. An outstanding recent exemplar is a huge book by the Oxford scholar Robin Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians.**

On one level, this book is a kind of detective story: how did the Christians, a small, weak, persecuted band of Jewish sectarians, take over the Roman empire and thereby the Western and Mediterranean worlds? Within this riddle we are confronted with what look like two alternative answers: there was something in the paganism

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* Knopf, 799 pp., $35.00.

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of that period that was just waiting for the monotheism of this sect; or, there was something in the religious or mystical ideas of the Greek world which stimulated this obscure sect to absorb an outlook that would take it far from its Jewish origins and thereby produce a wholly distinctive religion.

One is not giving away the "plot" of *Pagans and Christians* by revealing immediately that neither of these approaches is adopted by Lane Fox. Dealing mostly with the century and a half before the emperor Constantine's fateful decision in 312 C.E. to declare himself a Christian, he offers us the pagans and Christians of that age in their own terms, and lets us see, through masses of picturesque detail, how the two worlds flowed into each other through the force of the living patterns each took for granted. We are set free to roam in these worlds at will, observing a very mixed society in which people got along without obsessive direction, at least until those who came into authority from the 4th century on created a rigid religious culture with its twin poles of orthodoxy and schism.

READING Lane Fox one becomes aware of how dangerous it is to put history into separate compartments labeled "Christian," "pagan," and "Jew," especially when one is dealing with the evolution of ideas. It is fair to say, however, that this broad view would not have had much appeal for Dean Inge, who made it clear in the essay mentioned earlier that he traced back to Greece, rather than to the Hebrew Bible, the ideas that had set the Church on its way: "If we had to choose one man as the founder of Catholicism as a theocractic system, we would have to name neither Augustine nor St. Paul, still less Jesus Christ, but Plato." It was a mistake, Dean Inge wrote, to regard Christianity in terms of continuity with Judaism and a break from paganism: "In reality, the opposite is the case." Moreover, there was no conflict between the pagan cults and Christian public worship: "the vital religious life of the empire was associated with the mystery religions and the discipline of the 'philosophic life.'" In this field, Paul played a major role. He was a "a Jew of the Dispersion," not of Palestine, and his later Epistles are "steeped in the phraseology of the Greek mysteries."

Scholarly debate makes strange bedfellows. A recent book by the Jewish theologian Hyam Maccoby called *The Mythmaker: Paul and the Invention of Christianity** ascribes a similar role to Paul in creating a Christian credo drawn not from the Bible but from the Greek mysteries. But Maccoby, unlike Dean Inge, sees this as a degeneration from the strength and purity of a true monotheistic faith. To take just one point as an example: Dean Inge ascribed cardinal importance to the Christian borrowing of "the Greek idea" of the Fall of Man, which "the Jews would never have evolved for themselves" but which opened the path to what became the Christian idea of Redemption; the "sin of Adam became the first scene in the great drama of history, which led up to the Atonement." Maccoby similarly explains Paul's offer of release from sin through faith as an echo of the mystery religions, but contrasts this with the Jewish teaching that a sinner is one who has broken the divine laws of the Torah, and can be "saved" only by sincere repentance, without counting on the expiatory death of a divine redeemer as in pagan mystery religions.

Lane Fox for his part takes a very sophisticated view of all "borrowings," explaining that pagan religion was itself undergoing an evolution in this period. "Since the 3rd century B.C. pagans had developed a type of religious philosophy by which they explained and directed man's personal sense of God." What Lane Fox is describing here is not a formal cult but a general apperception of what was religiously significant, in which Platonic ideas were linked to the Greek sense of beauty. This double approach, he says, "became the neutral property of educated man, shared by pagans, Jews, and Christians," as in the variegated cultural atmosphere of Alexandria. Thus, titular Christians could understand the new teachings of their faith using the terms and the settings of Greek mythology, as when the crowd described in Acts, witnessing Paul and Barnabas heal a cripple, cries out: "The gods have come down to earth in the guise of men." They see Barnabas as Zeus and Paul as Hermes, a lively scene painted centuries later by Raphael.

The readiness to take a long view is always evident in Lane Fox, who resists any attempt to fit historical changes into a modern framework of understanding. He is especially critical of modern-day sociological explanations of ancient behavior, such as the theory put forward in 1965 by the classical scholar E.R. Dodds in *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety*. Dodds would have us believe that the spread of Christianity in the Roman world came about because the educated classes of the 2nd and 3rd centuries suffered an inner failure of nerve like that of the Left-oriented intellectuals of the 1930's. (Dodds's title conveys an approving reference to W.H. Auden's famous characterization of the modern period as an "age of anxiety.") Guilty over having been born into a world of material prosperity, they craved a new outlook. The old reasonable canons of thought had failed. There was a rise of skepticism and irrationality. The new religion came along in the midst of this era of anxious credulity, when people were ready to believe anything.

Not so, according to Lane Fox. Whether or not the educated classes in the Antonine age were undergoing the same kind of anxiety which sup-

* Reviewed in COMMENTARY by Jaroslav Pelikan, November 1986.

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posedly typifies modernity, the "educated skeptics" of Rome were "only a tiny part of the upper and educated classes of the age." As for irrationality suddenly opening a path for the new religion, actually the "irrational age" went back much further, to the mid-2nd century B.C.E. By the time of the Antonines, the educated classes were "rationalizing the irrational" (a phrase which incidentally might serve as a capsule definition of the rabbinic outlook as well).

A SOCIOLOGICAL explanation very different from that of Dodds has been put forward recently by another eminent classicist, Peter Brown. In a section on late antiquity which he contributed to a massive *History of Private Life from Pagan Rome to Byzantium*,* Brown connects the rise of Christianity with the gap in imperial society between the "notables" (the well-born) and all others, even those whose living standards were very substantial. The cultural style of the notables, fueled by a tightly-knit aristocratic system of common schooling and manners, was not something that could be shared even with the upper bourgeoisie; the resultant "crushing" sense of social distance, Brown writes, forced those excluded by the system to find a way of establishing a more "democratic" society. They had learned from visits by Paul (and others) that Christianity sought to abolish social distinction in all directions: between Jew and Greek, between slave and freeman, even between men and women. They saw this as applying not so much to the poor and the humble, as was likely to have been the case with early Christians in Palestine, as to themselves, people of substantial means who knew the world through their travels.

Thus in the early churches a distinctive morality developed which eschewed the cynicism of upper-class society in favor of simple virtues: singleness of heart, marital fidelity, honesty in business, almsgiving. Whereas the pagan upper classes were ready to spend large sums of money to enrich their city with monuments, inscriptions, and gladiatorial games (profusely documented by Lane Fox), the new Christians, in an echo of the common Jewish view, felt a sense of responsibility for the poor.

This shift to a new morality was, in Brown's view, "one of the most important aspects of the change from the classical to the Christian world." In time it encouraged a distinctive austerity, which became a visible Christian mark to outsiders the way the decency of family life was a mark of the Jews. But Christianity would soon shoot off in a direction unthinkable to Jews by developing austerity and celibacy as qualifications for leadership. There had been precedent for this in Palestine where, for instance, the Dead Sea sects had lived under a severe rule of celibacy; but they were a very small minority. Brown confesses that he cannot offer a satisfactory explanation for the later and more general move of Christianity toward self-denial and abstinence, all the more striking to him because it came at a time when the rabbis accepted marriage as "a near-compulsory criterion of the wise." Did sexuality become a highly-charged symbol for Christianity, Brown wonders, because it was such a supreme challenge? By whatever route, this new Christian attitude placed the society of the Church, ruled by celibate males, over against the corruption embodied in the society of the world.

The strength of this reaction has to be seen as the obverse of the persistent pull of the pleasures of pagan society, which Christians (in Lane Fox's telling) still enjoyed then and for a long time to come. The Jews, by contrast, had made their abhorrence of many aspects of pagan society much more explicit, with the rabbis spelling out the precise bounds to be set on any participation by Jews in activities in which worship of the gods might seem to be implied. But for Jews, too, despite their determination to keep some aspects of the pagan world at a distance, the dominant attitude was certainly a desire to get on agreeably with the society around them. They were quite sure that they could achieve this while never compromising on religious practice; and, perhaps surprisingly, this was an attitude which was as satisfying to the Roman authorities as to the Jews themselves.

Roman favor to the Jews has an interesting background. Whereas early Christians were often persecuted and even martyred by the Romans because of the vehemence with which they pursued the faith to which they had been converted, the Jews enjoyed Roman protection as practitioners of a *religio licita* (lawful religion), under a charter granted to them many years before by Julius Caesar and confirmed later by his successors. Moreover, the positive hatred of Christians at the popular level did not affect Jews to anything like the same extent.

According to a study by G.E.M. de Croix,† the pagan masses in Rome demanded persecution of the Christians not because of their beliefs and practices but because Christians had come to symbolize a kind of hostility to social custom, as expressed in the cults through which the gods were worshipped. It was true that the Jews also abstained from this worship, but Jewish rites were ancestral, and in the Roman view all peoples had to observe the customs of their ancestors. The Jews were thus, in de Croix's phrase, "licensed atheists" who did not set out to offend the Roman gods, while the Christians not only refused to take part in pagan religious rites but went out of their way to stop others from doing so. This open hostility to the gods endangered the *pax deorum*

* Edited by Paul Veyne, Harvard University Press, 688 pp., $29.50.

† "Why Were the Early Christians Persecuted?," in *Studies in Late Antiquity*, edited by M.I. Finley (1974).

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(the harmonious relationship between god and man), and was held to be responsible for all disasters which overtook the community. The only way to keep such an antisocial force under control was persecution. The Church Father Tertullian described the process with effective sarcasm: "If the Tiber overflows, at once the cry goes up: the Christians to the lions."

ALTHOUGH Jews too were subject to occasional violence, especially when they seemed to be engaging in attempts at conversion, behind this there seemed to be a pacific base of acceptance. The same had been true earlier in Palestine during the Greek-Hellenist period, despite interludes of warfare when the Jews fiercely resisted what they saw as attempts to impose pagan styles of king-worship at the Temple. Over this period as a whole, however, they had been forging their own religion in its rapidly developing rabbinic form while peacefully absorbing influences—the Greek language itself, personal names, legal procedures in Greek terminology, and much else—from the world around them. Even more significantly, their own religious writings had come to include books like Proverbs, Ben Sira, Job, and certainly many other books which drew Greek ideas permanently into the Jewish orbit.

The cultural influence of Rome was less pervasive than this. The rabbis had little use for Latin—"it is a language good for war"—and there was thus no literary effect comparable to that still being absorbed from the general Greek-Hellenic background. But the *political* accommodation with Rome was deep and persistent, at least following the crucial conflict in Palestine that ended in the loss of the Temple (70 C.E.) and the quashing of two subsequent uprisings (115-117, 132-135). Thus, at the end of the 2nd century, authority was given to the rabbinic leader, Judah Ha-Nasi, a descendant of Hillel, to organize Jewish self-government and Jewish participation in public affairs not only in Palestine but throughout the whole of the Jewish Diaspora. This authority covered education and rabbinical study, administrative appointments, the institutionalization of religious rulings based on the acceptance of the Palestine calendar, and, very importantly, the collection of taxes throughout the Diaspora to finance Roman as well as Jewish administrative needs. Rabbi Judah's central role in the subsequent development of Jewish religious life is expressed most notably in the Mishnah, the basic code of rabbinic law, which he compiled and which grew in time into the vast "sea of the Talmud," covering every facet of Jewish religious and social life.

Judah's title, which translates as Judah the Prince or Judah the Patriarch, indicates both his wealth and the style in which he lived at his center in Sephoris in Galilee, protected, according to one account, by eunuch guards, and dispensing his favors on a lavish scale, with tax reductions for scholars and famine relief for the poor. There are in the Talmud many recorded "discussions" between rabbis like the Patriarch and sundry Roman "emperors"; such talks often center on questions of Jewish religious belief, with the rabbi always bringing out the excellence of the Torah. Of course, what they also illustrate is a particularly self-confident attitude on the part of at least one segment of the Jewish world at that time toward secular government.

This attitude was by no means universal; Jewish public opinion in Palestine could be quite hostile to those like Rabbi Judah who were willing to take up positions of governmental responsibility. A much admired patriot of the time was a rabbi named Simeon bar Yohai, who defied the Romans during the persecution following the Bar Kokhba rebellion (132-135), escaping imprisonment by hiding in a cave for thirteen years. Emerging later to become one of the founding fathers of the Mishnah, he is reported to have had many arguments with Judah over the issue of collaboration with Rome. And when Simeon's own son Eleazar, also a distinguished rabbi, subsequently accepted a position in the Palestine administration which made him responsible for the capture of thieves and robbers, his teacher Joshua ben Karhah censured him severely for betraying his family heritage: "Vinegar, the son of wine! How long will you continue to hand over the people of our God to be killed!"

One dearly wishes that the rabbis of the time had filled out these scattered but revealing anecdotes with a substantial accounting in the fashion of the great historical writers of Bible times. Josephus, the one Jewish historian of this period whose work has survived, takes us up only to the close of the revolt against Rome with the last stand at Masada in 73 C.E. For the inner structure of Jewish life in these centuries one has to envisage a huge canvas on which the conditions of life varied tremendously from the independent opulence of many Jews in Alexandria to the crowded masses in Rome itself, where Jews were often satirized as beggars or peddlers.

But though living under widely different conditions, this scattered community, whose population had risen to perhaps six or seven million, certainly exhibited many forms of unity, and had done so long before the Romans reinforced a quasi-governmental structure under the patriarchal rule accorded to Judah Ha-Nasi. Judaism was the religious focus, and while fully observant practice was very uneven in the Diaspora, all were called on to maintain the costs of running the Jerusalem Temple (as long as it stood). A further consolidating force was the all-absorbing concentration on study, especially in Palestine and Babylonia. Though this had not yet taken root fully in the populous centers of the Diaspora, a power-

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ful base existed there which would in time carry Jewish pride and learning to many towns in Italy, North Africa, Northwest Europe, Spain, and even further afield.

According to E. Mary Smallwood in *The Jews Under Roman Rule* (1976), the central fact in these developments was the ability of the Jews "to preserve national identity even after generations of residence among Gentiles, and to resist assimilation except in superficial languages for everyday contacts." This exclusiveness had its disadvantage in promoting contempt or dislike, yet in the "fluid" centuries, Diaspora Jews felt free to assert an independent position quite firmly against the rising surge of Christianity. Among instances cited by Professor Smallwood is the arrest of a troublesome Christian leader in Smyrna, marked in the Jewish calendar as a "Great Sabbath." Evidence of this kind, she writes, indicates that Smyrna, like many other important cities, held "a large and influential Jewish community, enjoying good relationships with Gentile neighbors and considerable freedom of action."

But if, in the Roman world of that time, admiration for many aspects of Jewish life had not yet given way to consistent dislike, things became different in the 4th century after the conversion of Constantine. Whatever his personal convictions, "his action swept away the barrier of the imperial cult which had stood between Christianity and the state, and afforded the Church peace and protection in return for support of the imperial power."

The change was fatal for the Jews. Though they had played little part in instigating the suffering of the Church in the previous century, antagonism on the doctrinal front could never fade into insignificance or be resolved by compromise or agreement. "The Church in its new position of authority now had its rival at its mercy," and despite the earlier history of amity, "the official attitude of the Roman government toward Judaism was bound to shift eventually from benevolence to repression." By the beginning of the 5th century, Jews were debarred from imperial service; no new synagogues were to be built; the Jewish tax had been converted into an imperial tax. Increased attacks without redress drove the Jews in upon themselves to seek security in separation. "The peace of the Church set the Jews on the road leading to the medieval ghetto."

IF IN the 20th century we have lived to witness some ghastly end-products of those early times, we can also now see that they gave birth to and nurtured some fruitful, if at times uncomfortably complicated, relationships. A book like *Pagans and Christians* poses all sorts of absorbing questions about the connection between the mysterious Eastern world with both pagans and Christians in the Roman orbit. It may be gratifying to conclude, as Dean Inge did, that Greek mythology was driven powerfully through these mysteries toward a projection of one supreme god, consistent with Christian faith; but this is something less than the full story. As Lane Fox remarks, the Old Testament origins of early Christianity "were not easily smothered, even by the established cover of pagan towns." And as for a possible drive within the pagan world toward monotheism, we are told by Lane Fox that the growing authority given to one supreme god never excluded the worship of subordinates. Nor were foreign and exotic cults always a bridge to the Christian sequel; such abidingly Oriental gods as Mithras, Serapis, Isis, and others were themselves Greek creations.

The Christian universe of faith was always large and variegated enough to give scope to a certain amount of free play in this regard. It was different for the Jews, based securely as their tradition was on doctrinal teachings and a sense of assured history going straight back to the Bible and rabbinic sources. Yet the example of Rabbi Judah suggests one way in which it was possible for Jews to come to terms with the Gentile world without loss of dignity. To see the process demonstrated in a different way, warts and all, one need only look at Rabbi Judah's remarkable near-contemporary, the historian Josephus.

Flavius Josephus, whose Jewish name was Joseph ben Mattathias, was born in Jerusalem in 37 C.E. as a member of the priestly governing elite. His education combined the thorough Jewish knowledge needed for his official duties and the sophisticated Greek teaching that was routine for his class. He put this double-sided background to use by taking part as a relatively young man in high-level Jewish administrative, diplomatic, and military activities. After a military disaster in Galilee during the war of 68-70, when he commanded a division of Jewish fighters in the revolt against Rome, Josephus made the critical decision to forgo resistance and accept rationally that Roman domination was inevitable and even good in itself. In his own case this led ultimately to a position of imperial patronage in Rome, where he wrote, in Greek, two major books on Jewish history.

Josephus, in other words, consciously embraced that dual role which would fall to many Jews in later Diaspora history—preserving a distinct core of Jewish pride within a general posture of assimilation. People who played such a role had been seen before, especially in the Hellenistic world, and they would reappear in many individual societies—Italy, Spain and Portugal, and Turkey, among others—before emancipation and the emergence from the ghetto in the 18th and 19th centuries began to make them seem almost a universal Jewish type. Perhaps no one has ever been better than Josephus at expressing so complete a sense of identification with his surrounding culture, albeit with telltale notes of subservience and flattery; but the true force of Josephus's example

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comes through not so much in his big books of history permeated by that sense of identification with Greco-Roman culture, as in a relatively minor work, *Against Apion*, in which he finally let his hair down, so to speak, concerning his own instinctive feelings.

Apion, a Greek working in Egypt, had gathered together in a book on Egyptian history every scurrilous libel against the Jews, from their miserable origins to their despicable religious practices to their general hatefulness as human beings. Josephus, in a burst of unrestrained anger, wrote a reply in which every one of Apion's statements is shown to be false; in Josephus's picture, the Jews are instead elevated to a dignity and value of the highest order. The actual effect of this reply has not been pinned down by historians of the period, but Josephus's book is nevertheless symbolic in a major sense, and perhaps never more poignantly than in our own time.

External conditions permitting, assimilated or half-assimilated Jews of the last two centuries have most often been content to leave their Jewishness undefined, perhaps considering it a matter irrelevant to life in the free societies of the West. The Nazi trauma may have shaken this attitude to its roots, but it still did not force a realization among Jews in the democracies of what their own Jewishness might yet come to mean to them, even when their own lives were not directly at stake. The great exception occurred in the early days of June 1967, when it suddenly seemed that everything that had been achieved by Israel, as an embodiment of supreme value to Jews, was facing extinction. As innumerable individuals have since testified, a sense of instinctive identification, instantaneous and totally unexpected, seized the psyche of Jews all over the world. To have been born into the Jewish heritage became, in a split second, not just a fate but a matter of absolute positive value, of absolute *religious* value. And that value was if anything deepened and made more meaningful when the Six-Day War had run its course and Jerusalem was free again.

Josephus clearly felt something of these same emotions in writing *Against Apion*. The faith he had inherited, and which he had described with all due elegance and wit in his history books, was seen by him now, in a flash of light, as the force which would preserve Jewish survival in one form or another for all time.

THIS force of faith is something that has been felt often enough by Jews over the centuries—and hardly by Jews alone, although Jews may justly claim to have invented it. For Dean Inge in the 1920's, Christianity may have taken its meaning from Greece; but three centuries earlier, John Donne, Inge's illustrious predecessor at St. Paul's Cathedral, expressed the nature of Christian faith rather differently. Drawing in one of his *Holy Sonnets* on the same fervor that is so palpable among Jews in synagogue on the Day of Atonement, Donne cried, "Batter my Heart . . . That I may rise, and stand. . . ." One sees the traditional Jew, his head covered in a prayer shawl, beating his breast rhythmically to accompany the words of confession and contrition. Donne is there at his side: ". . . O'erthrow me, and bend / Your force to break, blow, burn and make me new." This is a force born not out of Plato but at Mount Sinai.

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Total Immersion

A Story

Allegra Goodman

"HEAVENLY father," the chaplain begins. The students hush at the outdoor assembly. They bow their heads and only a slight rustling can be heard among all those children marshaled in a standing wave—first-graders at one goal post, rising seniors at the other. "On this first day of school we thank you for your many blessings," the voice intones from the speakers rigged up on palm trees. "We thank you for Hawaii, for this campus of ours filled with flowers. We thank you for the lovely buildings of Oahu Prep. The new swimming pool, the Cochran gym. These are gifts of people who care for us and for the beauty of our learning environment. We thank you for our parents who give so much to us, for the men and women who clean the campus and tend the grounds. And for the teachers who work so hard to prepare us for the future. In Jesus Christ our prayer, amen."

A sudden flood of students pushes Dr. Lefkowitz from behind. Her homeroom diffuses into the crowd and she is left to teach her first class. Sandra grasps her teacher's manual tightly. It's not that she hasn't taught before. At Georgetown she was Head Teaching Fellow for Molière and the Comic Muse. She taught two sections a week. The only difference was those students already knew French. Looking out into the courtyard, Sandra tries to remember where they said her first class was.

The chair of the French department emerges from behind an oleander bush. A tall heavy woman, she moves with the proprietary magnificence of twenty years' teaching experience. "Hilda," Sandra calls. "Where is Dole Hall Annex?"

"*En français. Toujours en français,*" Hilda cautions jovially. "*L'entrée à Dole? C'est ici.*" And she rolls on, stately in her platform shoes and green print muumuu. "*Bonne chance,* Sandra," she calls back.

"*Bonjour, mes élèves,*" Sandra greets her class of small, frightened freshmen. "*Je m'appelle* Dr. Lefkowitz. *Je suis votre professeur de français. Comprenez-vous?*"

The class stares. "Is this French I?" asks a girl with a bleached shock of hair over one eye.

WHEN she gets home, Sandra's husband rushes to the door to greet her. "Sandy!" Alan cries. "How was it? How did the dress go over?" Sandra sinks into his arms, exhausted. She had completely forgotten the new dress, a tropical shirtwaist they had picked out for the first day of school.

"Oh, Alan," Sandra moans. "That woman. Hilda. What a concept! Apparently all French teachers have to speak French to each other at all times. She's the self-appointed guardian of the oral-aural method. She goes around telling us, "*Nous ne comprenons pas l'anglais.*" She's also informed me that next week it's my turn to write up the French I test on Unit I, but my class refuses to understand what I say, so I really don't know how I'm going to *finish* Unit I."

Alan pours Sandy a Coke. "Don't think for a minute that that woman teaches in French," he says. "She's probably from Iowa. You just go ahead and teach in English. You didn't notice the bookshelves," he adds. "They were only a hundred dollars each. And would you believe the guy who sold them to me is Israeli. Ephraim Tawil. He runs the whole business. Importing, manufacturing, and selling. He grew up in Rehovot, married an American, and came out here in the teak import business. And he gave me the name of a kosher butcher in California who can ship a quarter steer frozen—you write in the order. He leads the services for a traditional group that broke away from the temple and he wants us to come for dinner tonight."

"That's so sweet of him. But I can't stay out too late. I have to be at school by 7:30."

Alan stares. "What for?"

"Well, I was told unofficially that homeroom teachers are actually supposed to come half an hour early in case any of the kids want to talk."

"Jesus," says Alan, who had gone through med school swapping schedules to avoid early morning shifts.

"I mean, the school was founded by Congregationalist missionaries," Sandra explains.

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Alan rolls his eyes. "*We're* not missionaries."

"But I really want to make a good impression," Sandra says in a small voice.

THE Lefkowitzes drive their new Ford to the Tawils' house. Sandra navigates with a map of Oahu spread over her knees. They had married the year before and moved to Hawaii only a month ago. They still feel the newness, like the stiff sizing in new clothes. New car, new bookshelves, new bed, new apartment walking distance from the school so Alan can drive to the hospital. They still have to buy chairs and a table, but that will have to wait until the first pay checks come. Their pots and pans and dishes have just arrived from Washington. At Georgetown Sandra had planned to enter the diplomatic service and travel around the world. She married Alan and got halfway.

"Alan," says Sandra, "I think we're lost."

Alan pulls over on Waialae Avenue. Together they study the map. "We got off the freeway too soon," Alan says.

"Should we ask?"

"No, no. I know where to go." Alan starts the car.

Sandra's map blows in her face. "I never asked you about *your* day," she says.

"Couple of well babies, lots of school checkups." Alan changes lanes. "A Korean kid with a broken arm. His parents were hysterical. Somehow his friend's truck rolled over it. Lucky he wasn't killed."

"Now I think we overshot," says Sandra. "Get off here and try that thing. Wilhelmina Rise."

The transmission purrs as they climb the steep road. Below them the city stretches out to the shore. The ocean rises, a thin band broadening as they climb the hill. Deep and startlingly blue, it circles and overwhelms the view.

The Tawils live near the crest of the rise. Their stilt house tilts rakishly over the cliff. In front of the house, Tawil's truck stands parked on the sloping road. It looks ready to roll into the sea. A blonde woman answers the door and stares at them wordlessly, taking in Alan's sports coat and the basket of roses Sandra holds in her arms.

"Is this the Tawils' house?" Alan asks.

"Yes, who are you?"

"We're the Lefkowitzes. Ephraim invited us to dinner."

"He did? Oh, my God, this is *it*. This is *it*!" She screams into the house. Then, to Alan and Sandra, "Come in, come in. Listen, unfortunately I wasn't told anything about this." She leads them to a shaggy beige sofa in the living room and intercepts Ephraim as he emerges beaming welcome from the shower.

"That must be Judy, Ephrie's wife," Alan tells Sandra. They can hear Judy clattering pans in the kitchen. "Why do you do this?" she screams. "Why can't you *tell* me you're bringing people home? After what happened today. I can't believe it. I just can't."

"It's a surprise," says Ephrie smoothly. "Like I always tell you—relax or you'll never enjoy yourself." He returns to the living room as if no time has passed and repeats his welcome.

"Maybe we should come a different night," Sandra ventures.

"No." Ephrie waves the thought away. "This is the perfect night. Timing could not make it better." He takes the roses into the kitchen and tells Judy, "Here, have some flowers. You have to what-d'you-call-'em, smell the roses or they'll pass you by. If you scream all the time, you'll get a heart attack."

"Can I help?" Sandra asks Judy.

"Thank you, no," Judy answers. "I'm not really cooking. I think I'll just put up some hot dogs. You wouldn't believe what I went through today. And I got a $40 ticket on top of everything because my son released the brake in the truck and rolled over his friend. *He* breaks the kid's arm and *I* get a ticket."

"That was the one Alan treated," exclaims Sandra. "You should be grateful. It could have been worse."

"That's right," says Judy in a tense voice. "Accidents every day. But you try to keep them in the house. They're boys. Chaos. You don't have kids? Enjoy it now. Later you'll watch as they tear up your house. And your husband will regress. You'll see. He'll become just like them."

"We love having people," Ephraim reassures Alan in the living room. "All the time people. In and out. That's what I love. In Rehovot I had nine brothers growing up. Always someone in the house to fight with. Someone to talk to. That's why I come home to an empty house I get lonely. One time they impounded an Israeli ship for debt in Honolulu harbor. I went and got permission to have the men here for dinner every night until they flew them out."

"My God," says Alan, "how many were there?"

"Judy!" Ephrie hollers into the kitchen. "How many what-d'you-call-'em on that boat?"

"You come here if you want to talk to me!" Judy screams back. Then, after a pause. "Twenty-four, I think, until they found girls."

Setting the table, Sandra asks Judy, "So, you're not Israeli?"

"God, no," laughs Judy. "I grew up in Chicago and went on a one-year program to Israel. My parents' worst fears were realized. It was the thrill of my life. I told them I was going to have the whole traditional Yemenite wedding. You know, with the veil with all the coins on it. Mom cried and cried. My daughter went and married a *Shvartze*! Of course, they all got their way in the end, and I wasn't even consulted. We had the wedding in Chicago and before I knew it Ephrie decided we should stay in the U.S. In Israel I was a candidate for a degree in poultry science. I

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end up back where I started, training as a dental hygienist. You try and talk an Israeli into moving back to Israel. If I'd married an American I'd be there now."

"Oh, I don't know," says Sandra. "I always said I'd live in France, but you can't predict what will happen—with whom you'll end up falling in love, who you'll become."

"What's love got to do with it?" Judy scoffs.

The two couples sit down at the table and Judy calls out to the yard, "Hose down before you set foot in the house." Screams and spraying water last several minutes and then thirteen- and ten-year-old Lavi and Namir pound up the stairs and drip across the carpet. Each takes a hot dog from the table along with handfuls of chips. "You're wet," Judy snaps. "And you're behaving like animals. Dry off and then come back if you can behave like human beings." Namir takes a Coke and Lavi snatches another bunch of chips. Provisioned, they escape to watch TV.

"So," Ephrie announces. "We've got traditional services every other week."

"That's all?" Alan is disappointed. "How do you finish the Torah?"

"Every two years," answers Ephrie. "Listen, I don't ask questions, I just read."

"But that's absurd!" Alan protests.

"It's a hell of a lot better than the temple," Judy admonishes him. "You want to waste Friday night listening to Liebowitz talk about himself?"

"Why is it called the *Bet Knesset* Connection?" asks Sandra. "It sounds so 70's."

"The Gluecks chose the name when they took over," says Judy. "They came from Miami. Terence teaches art history and Pat is an orthodontist. Her children are ugly as sin, though."

After services at the Unitarian church, where *Bet Knesset* meets, the Lefkowitzes are formally introduced to the Gluecks. When Alan shakes hands he feels the smooth band of Terence's oval carnelian ring. Pat wears a mandarin orange painted silk dress that falls in open cowl folds exposing her chest. She is a tall woman with a beak nose set off by a black lacquered straw hat with a spotted veil.

"Alan," says Terence, "I really enjoyed your comments during the discussion."

"Well," Alan says defensively, "what I said wasn't actually so original. I mean, I don't think the notion that the serpent in Eden was a snake god is central to our tradition."

"Of course," Terence says soothingly. "Naturally this isn't the kind of thing you were taught in Sunday school. It's only when we leave Sunday school that we begin to see how subtle and subversive these texts really are. As a scholar, this kind of insight freed me to understand the Mannerist painters. I began to see the Mannerists not merely as descriptive trompe-l'oeil technicians, but as exponents of the 16th-century counterculture. Only then could I analyze Mannerism as a creative force."

Instinctively Alan bristles. There is something in Terence that makes Alan wary. He suspects Terence only half-believes his own speeches, but at the same time he cannot stifle the horrible thought that Terence might actually trust in this swaying rhetorical structure. Terence confuses him. For Alan is the kind of doctor who decided to take up medicine not because he did so well in organic chemistry, but because he read the memoirs of Albert Schweitzer in ninth grade.

"Does the discussion part of the service always last an hour?" Sandra asks Terence's wife.

Pat shakes off her children, who are trying to pull her toward the car. "Well," she answers, "it depends how much people want to say. Sometimes we have to cut the service in order to finish on time. Have you met Caroline?"

Caroline wears diamonds. Fleetingly, Sandra imagines her as a composite of designer names and concepts: Giorgio, Missoni, Dior, Ferragamo. Just as suddenly, Sandra sees herself through Caroline's eyes as some kind of non-signature generic. Unscented, hypo-allergenic, better sportswear. The vision only lasts a moment, however. Caroline has two children at Oahu Prep, an overweight husband, and a faint New England accent.

"We must get together some time," Caroline says, extending her long, cool fingers. "The thing is, we're doing some work on the house and we've all been camping out for six months in four rooms. The banyan tree grew down into the plumbing and cracked the pool, and before we knew it we had to open up the living room."

Alan walks over to Ephraim and shakes his hand. "*Y'asher koach*, well done, Ephrie. You did a beautiful job. Do you think we could convince people to hold services every week?"

"Listen," Ephrie claps his hand on Alan's shoulder. "Like I said before, I don't make waves, I just read. That's all. Everybody does their own thing. You can't change it. Some people don't even come to *shul* at all."

"Damn right," says Judy. "That's why we started *Bet Knesset* to begin with. There is no way I'll go to the temple on Friday night. Ask my kids. Friday night is my time."

Outside on the lawn stands a monkeypod tree with a tree house. Namir and Lavi climb from the tree house onto the church roof and won't let Caroline's daughter follow them. Six-year-old Jessica stamps in rage against the sturdy floorboards of the tree house. "My dad is richer than your dad," she screams.

"So," Lavi says, "my mom is richer than yours. Your mom doesn't do anything."

"Yes she does!" shrieks Jessica.

"What?"

While Jessica is thinking, her father calls from the ground that it's time to go home.

Driving back to the apartment, Alan reasons,

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"Well, they're friendly people. You can't expect the community here to duplicate the one at home. Everyone has different needs. Ephrie understands that. He's very good at compromise. There are a lot of complications living in Hawaii."

"And not so many options," sighs Sandra.

ALL students at Oahu Prep attend mandatory ecumenical services. Thursdays at ten Sandra is assigned to chapel duty. She must take attendance for three rows of students. During the organ prelude, she passes a clipboard and each student signs opposite his xeroxed signature. Sandra has the power to issue demerits if the students talk excessively, come to chapel barefoot, or slam their hymn books. The chapel looks like a theater in the round with its egalitarian pews surrounding the altar. Chaplain Whitaker tries to speak to each person as an individual. He uses a cordless microphone and walks up and down the aisles encouraging eye contact. Even as Sandra watches her quota of restless students, she herself feels watched.

Passing the clipboard, Sandra recognizes the girl next to her as a student in her French II class. "Ginnie Corpuz," the girl writes, shaping the tiny letters with an extra fine pen. "Nice name," whispers Sandra. "Are you Spanish?"

Ginnie looks up with her huge, black ironic eyes. "Sometimes," she says.

She is a strange girl. During the hymn Ginnie remains seated, writing a letter on an aerogram. Sandra hesitates to say anything. Finally, after the last chords, she whispers, "You know, it's so dark in here, and with your tiny writing you could ruin your eyes." As Ginnie puts her letter away, Sandra notices, surprised, that Ginnie has been writing in French. She shows so little interest in class and rarely turns in homework. The week before, during a grammar review, she sat silently without taking any notes. Then, while someone was trying to conjugate *partir*, Ginnie gathered her books and walked to the door. "I have cramps," she said dramatically, and left.

"Dear friends," says Chaplain Whitaker. "When I was in junior high school I was in love. Yes, I was in love with a freckled girl with braces on her teeth and scratches on her knees." He waits for the appreciative laughter to die down and then enunciates intensely, "Love is the most terrible thing in the world."

Ginnie puts her head down and closes her eyes. Sandra wishes she could do the same.

ON THEIR fifteenth anniversary, Ephrie and Judy Tawil invite everyone they know to an open house. The Tawils' hospitality makes for a strange assortment of guests: petite dental hygienists who work with Judy, tall Samoan carpenters who work for Ephrie, old friends from the Elks Club, a man Ephrie met jogging in Kapiolani Park. The entire *Bet Knesset* group is invited, and most of the couples come. Three years before, in Miami, the Gluecks socialized primarily with academics and professionals, but life in Honolulu takes a different tone. Here, they find the small dinner party replaced by the luau reunion of the extended family. As active and ambitious leaders, they find their large, stratified Miami temple replaced by a tiny group in which each individual must be catered to as if he were a one-man party holding out on principle in the Israeli Knesset. And so, according to local custom, Pat Glueck leaves her spike heels at the door along with all the other pairs of shoes ranging from size-15 Adidas to three-inch rubber thongs and pink plastic toddler boots with bells on them.

Ephrie never invites parents without kids. "I'm really touched by your hospitality," says Stan Lamkin, giving Ephrie a bottle of wine. "I can't remember the last time someone invited all seven of us."

"Like I always said," Ephrie replies, "at a party the more what-d'you-call-'em the better."

Guests overflow from the living room out to the lanai where Ephrie has placed two aluminum kegs of beer. Below, in the yard, children shriek, pelting each other in a rotten mango fight. Ephrie sits on the couch with three Samoan men. He looks especially small as he passes his homemade hummus. "You make this? Very good for you," compliments Luke Oangalele.

Judy passes through to refill her drink. "Yeah," she snipes. "He doesn't know where the stove is, but he can make hummus." The men laugh uproariously.

When the Lefkowitzes arrive, Judy ushers Sandra into the den, where she is drinking with Pat and Caroline. "Isn't this a little medieval?" asks Sandra. "Separate feasts for men and women."

"Uh-huh," says Judy. "Have a drink. You've got a lot of catching up to do."

Bewildered, Sandra sits down next to Caroline, who wears a little teddy of a cocktail dress. Pat turns up the volume on the TV. "We're watching *The Way We Were*," she tells Sandra sternly. And then turns her back to the set.

"You know," Judy says, "I'm glad Alan finally broke down and got a few aloha shirts. The first time I saw him in that blazer I nearly died."

"Doesn't anyone wear jackets and ties here?" Sandra asks.

"Of course they do," says Caroline. "They wear them to work, if they work in banks—or at funerals. Not in real life."

"You're right," agrees Sandra. "Alan wore a suit to the clinic, and one of the residents asked who'd died."

Judy rattles the ice in her drink. "You watch what Hawaii does to him," she warns. "Ten years from now and you won't be able to get him into shoes. Of course, Ephrie was like that to begin with. So he's found other ways to be disgusting.

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Someone told me he was good-looking. That's why I married him."

"There you are, Sandy." Alan walks in.

"Girl talk! Girl talk!" calls Caroline.

Alan backs away and Sandra rises to follow him, but Judy grips her arm. "We've got the cake in here," she says, cutting a piece of the white, frosted cake from Leonard's Bakery.

Sandra tries to eat the piece given to her, crumbling on a paper napkin.

"By the way, I brought you a present," Pat tells Judy. "I have here a letter from Barbara Ruth."

"Oh, my God, another one!" Judy squeals and Caroline tries to snatch the envelope, but Pat waves it above her head with a tipsy flourish.

"Who is she?" asks Sandra.

"Barbara Ruth Bloom, you poor child," giggles Pat, as if the name explained everything. " 'Dear Pat,' she reads, " '*Baruch Hashem*, praise God, I am delivered of my sixth child, Barak.' "

"Jesus H. Christ," drawls Judy.

"Will you listen?" demands Pat. " 'I called my parents and asked them once again to come to Israel and see their grandchildren, but because they felt the trip would be too strenuous, they sent a gift instead, which I distributed to the needy of Mea She'arim.' "

Pat clutches herself with laughter at the mention of Jerusalem's most pious quarter. "You have to understand," she gasps to Sandra, "what kind of people her parents are."

"Ira and Shirley Bloom," Judy explains, "live way up on Tantalus, and they're filthy rich. They each inherited. I forget what they did. I think Ira was a lawyer, but I mean, mainly, they had this daughter they named Barbara Ruth."

"But wait," Caroline puts in, "you've got to tell about their house first. They have a house on the crest of the ridge. Spectacular. They spent a fortune. It was built for them by a New York architect and then redone to look lived in. The whole thing was a complete aggravation. Not only was it constantly remodeled—and they have my total sympathy on that—but it was always sliding down the mountain. Not sliding so you could see, but sort of inching down, sidling down, since they didn't use a local architect and it wasn't really entrenched in the rock. So after every rainstorm they have to spend thousands jacking the place up, redoing the retaining walls."

"Caroline," says Judy, "we're talking about Barbara Ruth."

"I know, I know," Caroline protests. "I was setting the scene."

"Listen, it's my letter, would you let me tell," Pat orders. "OK. They had one daughter, Barbara Ruth. And she worked for me as a hygienist in Miami. She was terrible, by the way. She could not be trusted to install braces without supervision. She didn't cement well; her brackets popped off within days. She soldered the wrong wires together. Unmitigated disaster."

"I'm confused," says Sandra. "How did she get to Miami from Hawaii?"

"Just listen," shushes Judy. "She grew up with these overprotective parents and then went off to the University of Miami, where she met and married a Sikh."

"Oh my God," Sandra laughs. "Did she convert?"

"Of course."

"What was he like?"

"How should I know?" asks Pat. "I never met him. This happened when she was about nineteen. She worked for me much later."

Caroline stretches out her legs and curls her toes. Unwatched on the TV, Barbra Streisand and Robert Redford meet again years later. "Well," says Caroline, "he was about six-two not counting his turban, and he rode a phallic black motorcycle."

"How do you know?" demands Judy.

"I'm guessing," murmurs Caroline. "He made her feel for the first time like a whole woman."

Pat pours herself another drink. "That's antifeminist crap," she says. "We're talking about a young woman led into an exploitative relationship and losing her identity. Becoming a Sikh, for God's sake."

"Oh, come on," says Caroline. "She had a lot of fun. I lost mine to a British exchange student at Columbia. He was quite impressive. Went back and became an MP. I get all sentimental when I think about it. I feel like Nathan Hale. I only regret that I have but one. . . ."

"Shut up, Caroline. The point is, the marriage didn't last."

"What did her parents do?" asks Sandra.

"Paid," says Pat. "They just kept paying. They bought her an apartment in Miami. They bought her beautiful clothes."

"She was really homely," adds Judy.

"But she had one beauty," amends Caroline. "Long, uncontrollable, flaming red hair."

"Oh, please," Pat grimaces. "Let's just say she had very lovely red hair which she didn't really take care of. She never *did* anything with it."

Judy ruffles her own short peroxide blonde curls. "And her face didn't really live up to it."

"ANYWAY," Pat continues, "after her divorce she got the job with me. And she went into a deep depression. Most of my girls work for one or two years, get married, then carry on eight months into pregnancy and quit. But as they kept leaving, Barbara Ruth just stayed on and on. She never got any better at wiring either. Also, she was depressed by all these women big with child. She'd had a miscarriage by the Sikh. For which I told her she should be grateful. We'd gotten quite close by this time. Terence tried several times to fix her up with grad students at Coral Gables. In the end she decided to come back home."

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"Was she still a Sikh?" asks Sandra.

"She was in therapy," answers Judy. "That's when I met her. We were cleaning teeth together at Kaiser Dental Clinic. She was very, very quiet. Almost stopped talking. She would work all day and then go home to her parents. They bought her a little white Alfa Romeo and she drove it back and forth from home to work. Twenty-eight years old and that was all she did."

"Then one Rosh Hashanah," Caroline interrupts, "I was sitting at the temple—this was before *Bet Knesset* started—and Barbara Ruth walks in. Total shock."

"Will you let me talk?" snaps Judy. "It wasn't such a total shock. Her marriage was over. She wasn't *really* a Sikh. It was a phase. She'd had some kind of quickie conversion. But now she wanted to learn. So she studied for conversion to Judaism with Rabbi Siegel. He was incredible. He said she didn't need conversion, so they called it a confirmation ceremony, and since we didn't have a *mikveh* here, she did the ritual immersion out in the waves at Sandy Beach."

"Let me guess," Sandra tries to join in. "She began to talk again. Her parents forgave her."

"Wrong, wrong, wrong," declares Pat.

Judy shifts restlessly on the couch. "Just let me finish. She took a course in marine biology in the University of Hawaii extension program. And there she met Brian Akimoto."

"He had the most beautiful body," sighs Caroline, "slim and muscular, but not brawny. He made her feel like a woman again."

"You never met him," Judy points out. "He had a good build, but he was short like Ephrie. A real local type. He came from Kalihi and he was studying kelp harvesting. He was the teaching assistant in Barbara Ruth's course. A real fisherman. He did it all: crab hunting, spear fishing. As a kid he'd worked summers on a tuna boat."

"Meanwhile," Caroline breaks in, "Ira and Shirley Bloom, who had been paying and paying and jacking their house up, start to feel intimations of mortality. They have one daughter, Barbara Ruth. One source of grandchildren."

"Wait a minute," protests Sandra. "They aren't going to decide Brian Akimoto is suitable!"

"Of course not. I'm just trying to describe the extent of their aggravation. I mean everyone knew they were the richest unaffiliated Jews on Oahu and the temple couldn't get a cent from them. But the thought of intermarriage and no grandchildren was driving them crazy."

RAISING her voice, Judy reclaims her story. "Brian was definitely interested. He took Barbara Ruth hiking to Hau'ula. He took her to an all-pidgin review at the Waikiki Shell. I don't know what they saw in each other, but they fell in love."

"Respect and trust—that was their secret," suggests Pat.

"Loneliness. Hormones," volunteers Caroline.

"Anyway," Judy concludes, "she came to work every day more cheerful, more radiant. They weren't even sleeping together."

"How do you know?"

"I asked. She met his family. Then she forced poor Shirley and Ira to invite him to dinner. When Barbara Ruth told me how he arrived I knew he was serious. He brought a whole ulua, just caught, 28 inches from head to tail, wrapped in ti leaves. You've got to understand, for local people this is it. Roses mean nothing. When you get a fish, you know it's for real. I told Barbara she'd better get ready for the big one. Listen, let me tell you about this fish. Not only did he convert to marry her. This simple local boy left Hawaii, his family, everything. You see, after Barbara had emerged from therapy and the waves at Sandy Beach she wanted a completely new life. I could see the change right away, because at the clinic she suddenly became a neat-freak. This was the girl who had received *warnings* about tying back her hair. Now she was sterilizing instruments every two minutes. She was a vegetarian for a while, then macrobiotic. Just from one craziness to another, like she was looking for something to be compulsive about. And finally, she settled on being Jewish. She evolved this dream—of living a totally Orthodox existence. And Brian went along. Would you believe, they moved to Mea She'arim, Brian reconverted under an Orthodox rabbi, learned Hebrew, and took the name Yehudah. Barbara Ruth cut off her hair. Right away they started having babies. Naturally, Shirley and Ira are beside themselves. 'What have we done wrong? We gave her everything! Why did she do it? We never even sent her to Sunday School!' Here's their only daughter living with black hats so black they burn bus stops and throw rocks at cars driving by on *Shabbat*. They're in agony and they do the only thing they know how. They send huge, huge amounts of money."

" 'The children are well, *baruch Hashem*, the Lord be praised,' " Pat reads from the letter. " 'My oldest, Yael, is now nine. How blessed we are to see our children learn and grow. Yehudah is still working as a tour guide in Eilat. He is a gift to the tourist bureau with his fluent Japanese and his golden *nefesh*, that sweet soul of his. I often remember that day I first met him. I felt suddenly that his name, Akimoto, was an omen. The Japanese syllables spell out *Hashem*'s promise—and I will raise him up—*v'akim oto*. How he has fulfilled this prophecy, raising up his family, elevating every act so that each is holy. For me, ours was the most beautiful seder in Mea She'arim because Yehudah led it with such love and understanding. And at Succoth, the four corners of our *succah* roof seem to lift toward the sky in prayer. Tears of joy fill my eyes when I think how every year on that holiday our chil-

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dren run in and out of the villa, carrying the silver and platters of food. I feel such an indescribable peace and happiness in simple things—lighting the Sabbath candles, looking up at the stars through the thatch of the *succah*, baking bread, sending money to the Girls' Orphanage, ironing little shirts and dresses to give to the little needy children of Mea She'arim. Pat, look through the rummage sales and send me any used clothes or toys that you can find.

" 'I write this letter with a full heart, feeling that every day is a blessing, each new child a sign, one star in *Hashem*'s covenant. One day our people will be gathered up. *Im yirtzeh Hashem*, God willing, tomorrow we will welcome the messiah.

" 'My love and prayers with you,

" 'Brochah-Ruchel Akimoto.' "

At Oahu Prep, Sandra has given up trying to teach in French. She finds that her French class does not pick up irregular verb conjugations from pure idiomatic dialogue. She types up grammar-review sheets to supplement the green and purple "grammar tips" in the text. Sandra and her classes maintain only the thinnest shell of the oral approach. "*Maintenant*," Sandra says, "we will study reflexive verbs." And the students ask, "*Pourquoi est-ce-que le* verb over here instead of over there?" Sandra feels that she is cheating, but she finds that she cannot make herself understood in French. Sometimes, as she diagrams verb endings on the overhead projector or stops to replay a tape of market vendors hawking their wares, she worries that her booming department chair will enter and denounce her with French obscenities. Sandra imagines herself dismissed, crushed by Hilda's platform shoes, smothered by the floral yardage in her idiomatic muumuu.

The Monday after the Tawils' party, Sandra's French II class struggles through *Eugénie Grandet*. Pacing the floor, Sandra listens to Candice read and translate from her heavily annotated *Graded French Reader*. "*Il venait lui donner le bras pour descendre au déjeuner*," Candice reads. "*Il la regardait d'un oeil presque bon*—he looked at her with his one good eye."

"No, Candice," Sandra stifles laughter. "Both of his eyes were working fine. Try a less literal translation."

"His one good eye," Candice repeats.

"Consider the context. How does this old man feel toward the poor girl?"

"*Je ne sais pas*," says Candice.

"Class, can you help us out?" Sandra waits a moment, according to ritual. Then she answers her own question. "He felt benevolent. He cast upon her *un oeil presque bon*, a benevolent eye. You know, class, as we move on we're going to be reading some great literature. This is Balzac, here. This is the language of Molière, Racine, Descartes, Sartre. Let's get out of the mindset of those first-year textbooks that gave us such insight into contemporary French grocery lists."

The door swings open and Hilda marches in to pick up the *Skiing in Québec* filmstrip. "*En français, ma chérie*," she hisses.

That afternoon at the French teachers' meeting, Hilda stands and presents a reminder of the aims of the Oahu Prep modern language department. "We have an audio-visual-cultural approach," Hilda says patiently. As Sandra has learned, English is spoken at department meetings. Hilda warms to her subject. "Literature, formal constructions, all this is important. But learning a language boils down to one thing. Oral survival skills. Authentic pronunciation, current popular constructions are imperative. How are the kids going to manage in France if they are afraid to talk? We have to keep them talking. Make them live, breathe, and dream French. Total immersion is what we're after. Content will come. The fine points will come. I want them to sound French. I want them to go to Paris and order a beer and be mistaken for French kids."

Honestly puzzled, Sandra asks, "But why ever would they want to be mistaken like that?"

"Alan," Sandra calls into the other room as she dumps her purse and books on the couch. "Alan, I said something terrible today at the meeting. Does that mean I could lose my job?"

"Can't hear you, hon." Alan emerges from the closet carrying their folding luggage cart. "The meat came in!" he cries breathlessly. "Come down and give me a hand."

The car is crammed with frozen kosher meat wrapped in white-paper packages. Each parcel is labeled with a grease pencil: LAMB, HAMBERG., CHIX. Sandra straps a turkey and packages of stew meat to the luggage cart. Alan follows carrying a ribeye roast. Their neighbors stare as they ride the elevator up and down, carting their frozen meat up to the tenth floor.

"Good thing we got the freezer," Alan says. They look at their enormous Sears freezer proudly. It's a bit out of scale for the apartment and they had to put it in outside the kitchen hall, but it does hold all the meat. "Well," Alan sings out, "just in time. I'm starving. What'll we have?"

"There isn't time to thaw anything for tonight," Sandra reminds him. She flops down and unfolds the paper, careful to keep the newsprint away from the couch. "Alan," she says, "I don't think my students are ever going to sound French. In Paris people will know they're spoiled American teen-agers right away."

"Rich tourists," says Alan. "They'll get preferential treatment. Who cares if they sound French?"

"Well," Sandra sighs. "The other problem is they don't *know* any French. I wish Hilda would get off my back. I just want to teach them some *verbs*. I wish she'd cut this cultural crap."

"Sandy!" laughs Alan. "Is this the girl with

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Monet posters in her room who went around singing because she got into the Proust seminar and was going to use quiet diplomacy to make France pro-Israel?"

"Well, I may yet," Sandra protests. "But really, Alan, do you think I'm going to lose my job?"

"No," Alan answers roundly. "I think you're wonderful. And I've always thought prep schools were fascist. You just keep your sense of humor. *Tournez l'autre chic.*"

"Hey, stop!" Sandra yelps. "No tickling."

"*Comment?*" asks Alan.

SANDRA has some difficulty taking off time for both days of Rosh Hashanah. Her dean understood completely about the first day, but he thought a second day was a bit excessive. "You know," Dean Walker said, "we've had quite a few Jewish students, and none of them took two days. I guesss the kids hate to miss anything at school. Oahu Prep is a real twenty-four-hour experience. But use your judgment."

Rosh Hashanah services run long because *Bet Knesset* has a translation policy. Terence stands next to Ephrie, and at intervals he reads aloud from the English.

Sandra sighs and estimates the pages left until the end. Judy glares at her sons and raises a threatening hand to Namir, who hangs upside down on his chair. "I remember your youthful devotion, the love of your bridal days," Terence reads. "How you followed me through the wilderness, through a land unsown."

Sandra looks at Judy and tries to imagine her raking chicken manure in Israel. "If I'd married an American I'd be there now," she had said.

"*Vahakimoti lach brit olam,*" Ephrie continues, and he translates himself, "I will build up for you an eternal covenant."

"The omen," Caroline giggles, nudging Sandra. "Barbara Ruth's omen, *vahakimoti*. See, my theory is she was lusting for Brian all along, but then she heard his name calling her in *shul*. 'Akimoto.' That was what did it. That's why they had to go and build the land. One word, and they forgot everything their parents tried to teach them."

Ephrie reads on, "*Havain yakir li Ephraim.*" His voice catches hoarsely.

"I'll take it," Terence says, and he declaims in the accent he acquired at Oxford: "Is it because Ephraim is my favorite son, my beloved child? As often as I speak of him—"

"I speak *to* him," Ephrie bursts out. "I speak, what-d'you-call—words, anger to him."

Terence continues smoothly, "I will remember him yet. My heart yearns for him."

"Guts," Ephrie corrects, voice choking. "My guts are burning up for him, but I have pity."

Below, in the congregation, Pat leans forward and whispers to Sandra, "It's always an ego trip for Ephrie. He breaks up every year when he reads his name in that verse."

Ephrie catches Pat's stage whisper and looks up, eyes red with fierce tears. "It's not just because it's my name," he says.

PAT GLUECK has become increasingly dissatisfied with the services at *Bet Knesset*. She calls for a meeting at the *Shabbat Shuvah* new members wine-and-cheese kiddush. "This is the Sabbath of Repentance," she says, nibbling a sliver of goat cheese. "This is the last chance to change before Yom Kippur, right? So now maybe we should talk about where our group is heading. I think we have a quorum of concerned people."

The Tawils and the Lefkowitzes gather around along with a few college students and a grizzled tramp who often stops by for the food after services. Pat faces the congregation and announces, "Terence and I have discussed this issue and we want to share our views with you. I come to *shul* to pray, not to watch a male show. I want women counted in the *minyan*. I want women to lead the service, to have *aliyahs*, and take a leadership role."

"*Aliyahs* are just blessings over the Torah," Ephrie responds. "In Rehovot we auction them off."

"That's barbaric," Pat springs back. "We're tired of taking a back seat."

Ephrie smiles benignly. "Pat," he proclaims, "anything you want to lead you lead. As soon as you learn Hebrew—then I take a break."

"That's not the issue, Ephrie, and you know it," Pat huffs.

"Yes it is the issue," snaps Judy. "My husband is trying to say that this group was chartered to run traditional services."

Terence Glueck knits his brows professorially as he reminds them, "Historically we often find that, in time, traditions lose their psychological potency. Rituals become emotionally bankrupt."

"As far as I'm concerned," Pat breaks in, "egalitarianism is the moral crux of the Conservative movement in America."

"I don't think that's true," Sandra says. "And you're not speaking for all of us."

Caroline speaks up suddenly. "I'm for Pat," she says. "Egalitarianism might be fun."

"Wait a minute," protests Alan. "I grew up in a Conservative congregation and gender wasn't an issue for us. I think I would be uncomfortable if. . . ."

"Uncomfortable!" Pat's voice rises. "How do you think women feel, thrust into the audience? Always the echo in responsive readings. I want to lead. The Torah reading is the heart of the service. The *aliyah* is the heart of the reading. And that's just where I'm excluded! For three years, I've sat here patiently. I'm not a new member. I've shown my commitment. Now I want this group to give a little back to me. Let's face it. What we've got here is a boys' club. This is my holy book too, and I want a piece of the action. I

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want to sing. I want to mourn. It's a crime to shut me out. You are negating me. You are denying me and relegating me to second class because you think that I'm impure."

Alan backs away from Pat's torrential words. Behind him, the tramp loads a basket of crackers into his bag. He sips delicately from a bottle of Manischewitz. "Pat," Alan says, "I don't think you're impure. I know we can resolve this. I've heard in some places couples go up together for *aliyahs*."

Pat scoffs. "Don't do me any favors. I don't want half a blessing. I'm not part of Terence. I'm my own person and I want an individual leadership role. I'm telling you these services are patronizing, and I want *in*."

"Pat," Judy screams, "if you want to be a man so badly why don't you try and grow a penis?"

Pat turns on Judy. "And if you want to live like Brochah-Ruchel, move to Mea She'arim. You laugh at her, but I think her life is what you've always wanted. You pretend to be liberal. Inside you're literal and rigid. You're afraid of change, and you want to climb into a paternalistic hole and get pregnant and follow orders every day because that's safe."

Judy doesn't answer.

At the wine-and cheese table the tramp puts down his bottle. "My dear," he confides to Pat, "I grew up in a small town." He loses his train of thought and wanders outdoors.

Alan breaks the silence. "Whatever happens," he urges, "let's not break up the group we've got. We're such a small community and so fragmented already. It's so important to stay together. We can compromise—right, Ephrie?"

Ephrie sighs. "I couldn't have women up there with me," he says. "Not because of me—I wouldn't leave the *shul* for myself. But if I stayed it would be shameful for my father's memory."

"If Ephrie leaves, I go too," says one of the college students.

"You're breaking up the *minyan*," Terence accuses Ephrie.

"And you don't care about the content of these services at all," adds Pat. "You're motivated by pure sentiment and emotion."

"So are you," Ephrie answers. "So are you."

SANDRA's French classes make a poor showing on the departmental midterm that Hilda composed. As Sandra records her grades she sees that her students' median score is several points lower than Hilda's. She looks miserably at the smiling photo of Alan on the wall of her office cubicle. She wants to phone him, but he's probably in the emergency room. In the next cubicle she hears Liz whispering to Michael about the U.S. history lesson plan. The whole faculty thinks the two are having an affair.

Sandra pulls her lunch from her desk drawer. Though she doesn't eat the cafeteria meat, she usually takes her brown bag to the teachers' dining hall to be sociable. Today she can't face the other French teachers with her midterm grades. She bites into her turkey sandwich. They had opened up all the leaves on their drop-leaf table and invited the Tawils for Thanksgiving. Though it was hard to accept the break-up of *Bet Knesset*, she and Alan now go to Ephrie's services on Saturday morning. Ephrie has trouble finding ten men for a *minyan*. The Gluecks count women. For some reason the situation reminds Sandra of her mother's injunction: don't take the last piece of cake; take half of what's left. She imagines Ephrie's new group splitting just as *Bet Knesset* had. Splitting like infinitely divisible cake. Scattering like crumbs.

"Mrs. Lefkowitz?" A student messenger from the office hands her a note. Heart pounding, Sandra puts down her half-eaten sandwich and walks to the dean's office. He can't know about the midterm grades yet, but Hilda must have complained. The courtyard seems unbearably bright. Students loll under the trees reading and talking. The sky is a cloudless, searing blue.

"Sandra!" Tim Walker hails her as she enters his office. "How's it going?"

"Very well, thanks." Sandra takes a seat near the dean's Yale rolltop desk.

"Well, I know you're busy, and I've got to run, so I'll make it short. We've got the scores on the National Council of French Teachers' exam, and they gave me a certificate of commendation to pass on to you as the teacher of Ginnie Corpuz who won, uh, let's see, third place nationally. So here you are. It's just super, the job you're doing with the kids. Good going."

Sandra bounds into her next class. Smiling joyously she passes back the heavily corrected midterms. She wants to congratulate the third place national champion in front of all the students, but Ginnie is absent. Sandra contents herself with trying to encourage her depressed class. "Improvement counts," she reminds them. "You can all redeem yourselves on the final."

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Justice to John P. Marquand

Terry Teachout

"WHEN you are dead," John P. Marquand once said, "you are very dead, intellectually and artistically." Twenty-seven years after Marquand's death, he is very dead indeed. His books are neither read nor remembered. Yet at least one critic, Clifton Fadiman, once suggested in all seriousness that "in time . . . he will come to occupy a place in the American novel of the 20th century not too unlike that of Thackeray in the English novel of the 19th," and *Life* magazine described him in 1943 as "the most successful novelist in the U.S."

If these two appraisals seem oddly contradictory, it is because John P. Marquand occupied a place in American literary life which is perhaps less salient than it used to be: that of the serious popular novelist. At the peak of a career spent tailoring slick love stories and espionage serials for the readers of the *Saturday Evening Post*, Marquand unexpectedly brought out *The Late George Apley*, a satirical novel of manners about Boston society which won the Pulitzer Prize and eventually led him to curtail his lucrative magazine work in favor of full-length novels. But the new Marquand soon became even more popular than his strictly commercial predecessor. Not only did his novels sell handsomely, but as of 1952 his total book sales outside of regular trade sales, meaning book-club editions and cheap reissues, came to 3,833,840. This figure, impressive enough in 1987, was at the time altogether staggering.

To compare Marquand with someone like, say, John Irving is only to flaunt the absurdity of the juxtaposition. In Marquand's own time, however, he had a British counterpart with whom comparison is more telling, W. Somerset Maugham. Both men established themselves after long apprenticeships with novels which were subsequently and wrongly regarded as their best work. Both shunned modernism, preferring to write traditional prose narratives with a distinctly sententious streak. Both were fascinated by the Orient. Both dabbled in genre fiction, Marquand with his Mr. Moto serials and Maugham with *Ashenden*. Both became respected arbiters of middlebrow taste, Marquand as a judge for the Book-of-the-Month Club, Maugham as an anthologist. Both wrote unashamedly for money, Marquand for the *Saturday Evening Post*, Maugham for *Cosmopolitan* and the London stage. Both eventually became millionaires through their writing.

Not surprisingly, both men also suffered from severe cases of critic trouble. While newspaper reviewers and the editors of genteel publications like *Harper's* and the *Atlantic Monthly* regularly sang Marquand's praises, the important critics would have nothing to do with him. Maugham had the same problem, and it is worth noting that both writers eventually found themselves on the receiving end of similar-sounding attacks by that indefatigable enemy of the blockbuster novel, Edmund Wilson. Reviewing Maugham's *Then and Now* for the *New Yorker* in 1946, Wilson claimed that "Mr. Maugham, I cannot help feeling, is not, in the sense of 'having the métier,' really a writer at all." As for Marquand, he got his the preceding year in a *New Yorker* review by Wilson of his novel, *Repent in Haste*:

> Mr. Marquand hasn't the literary vocation—or maybe métier is the better word. A novel by Sinclair Lewis, however much it may be open to objection, is at least a book by a writer—that is, a work of the imagination that imposes its atmosphere, a creation that shows the color and modeling of a particular artist's hand. But a novel by J.P. Marquand is simply a neat pile of typewritten manuscript.

While the likes of Clifton Fadiman may have thought John P. Marquand the American Thackeray, it was the Edmund Wilsons who determined his place in American literary history. Nevertheless there have been occasional posthumous glimmers of interest. Two biographies have appeared since Marquand's death, one a superficial journalistic job by Stephen Birmingham, the other a long, thoughtful study by Millicent Bell. And a Chicago publishing house, Academy Chicago Publishers, has recently brought out attractive paperback editions of *Point of No Return* and *H. M. Pulham, Esquire*,* with the intention of reprinting the rest of the novels in due course. But the critics have remained silent, and no rush to revaluation seems likely at this late date.

To some extent, revaluation is unnecessary. Marquand's early potboilers are hardly worth saving, while most of his later novels, despite their glossy finish and good intentions, are precisely what Diana Trilling said they were in her 1946 review of Marquand's *B.F.'s Daughter*: well-made literary commodities for the busy housewife. ("Without transcending the high-grade commodity level, he has done a great deal to raise our standards of what a literary commodity can

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* *Point of No Return*, 559 pp., $11.95; *H.M. Pulham, Esquire*, 432 pp., $9.95.

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be.") But *The Late George Apley*, *Wickford Point*, and *H. M. Pulham, Esquire* are certainly more than mere commodities, and Marquand's 1949 novel, *Point of No Return*, easily ranks with the best work of James Gould Cozzens, the American novelist whom he most resembles. Yet this book, the most completely realized product of Marquand's maturity, was widely dismissed, even by some of the reviewers who had previously been his staunchest supporters, as an overlong bore.

By 1949, of course, to praise John P. Marquand in print was decidedly *infra dig*. Still, such unanimity invariably justifies extreme suspicion. Was there something about Marquand's work that the critics found fundamentally unsympathetic? The answer to this question, not surprisingly, turns out to be rooted in matters of class and taste. Precisely the stuff, in fact, of a John P. Marquand novel.

NEWBURYPORT, a Massachusetts seaport town which, renamed "Clyde," is the setting of several of Marquand's novels, was the home of the Marquand family as early as 1732. The Marquands were well-to-do shipowners and bankers. John Phillips Marquand's mother was the niece and namesake of Margaret Fuller, to whom her son would later refer with unconcealed tartness as "that extraordinary Dorothy Thompson of the Transcendentalists." Marquand's father was a civil engineer turned stockbroker, and Philip Marquand's business led the family from Newburyport to Wilmington, Delaware, where John was born in 1893, and eventually to Rye, Connecticut, where the Marquands lived for several years in the comforting lap of upper-middle-class luxury.

The poet and critic Randall Jarrell once called John Marquand "a reporter, a good reporter, with troubles of his own, bad troubles." Marquand's troubles began when the panic of 1907 wiped his father out. Philip Marquand went to California with his wife in search of work, and young John was pulled out of the stylish private school he attended in Rye and sent to Newburyport to live with his father's two maiden sisters at Curzon's Mill, the family homestead.

The doors to Eden abruptly slammed shut on Marquand. Instead of going to Groton or Exeter, he attended Newburyport High. Instead of sailing through Harvard with a comfortable allowance and an active social life, he scraped his way through on a chemistry scholarship. "He was one of the boys," Marquand would write of the similarly situated hero of *So Little Time*, "who wore celluloid collars which you could wash off in your room, and who used the reading room in the library as a resting place because there was no other place to go, and who ate a sandwich there for lunch, and to whom no one spoke unless it was absolutely necessary."

The kind of social limbo into which Marquand was thrust by sudden poverty affects different people in different ways. Some put it behind them easily and get on with their lives. Others, stung to the quick by the experience of snobbish exclusion, devote all of their adult energies to the quest for belonging, whether by insinuation or by sheer force of will. Still others spend their lives in active, sometimes violent, rejection of the social world from which they were excluded. Marquand's own response was far more ambiguous. Unable to shake the passionate conviction that he should have been a St. Grottlesex boy and a member of Porcellian, he resented his father for having gone broke. Unwilling to reject the values of Harvard, he spent the rest of his life trying, with considerable success, to become an insider. Too intelligent finally to accept these values, he bought his way into society with money made by writing stories and novels satirizing the world which had initially spurned him.

John P. Marquand would return to the splendors and miseries of his youth in book after book, and he would order his personal life with similar compulsiveness, eventually becoming a member of the Harvard Board of Overseers and the Newburyport Tuesday Night Club. Needless to say, this was a recipe for unhappiness, and Marquand appears to have been a surprisingly unhappy man, unable to turn his back on Boston and escape the slights of the past. ("The hardest thing to live down," Marquand wrote in *Wickford Point*, "is some ancient affront to vanity.") But it is also a recipe for a very subtle and interesting novelist, which is what he would become.

AS SOON AS Marquand graduated from Harvard, he shook the dust of the laboratory from his feet forever and got a job at the Boston *Evening Transcript*, the paper celebrated by T.S. Eliot for having a readership which swayed in the wind like a field of ripe corn. He left the *Transcript* in 1917 to serve in World War I as a first lieutenant. He fought at Château-Thierry with the 77th Regiment Field Artillery. After the war he worked at the New York *Tribune* and as a copywriter at J. Walter Thompson.

One day Marquand sat down and wrote a short story about a boxer called "The Right That Failed" which he took to Carl Brandt, one of New York's top literary agents. Brandt sent it to George Horace Lorimer, editor of the *Saturday Evening Post*, who promptly scooped it up and paid Marquand $500. (Within a couple of years he was getting $3,000 a story.) Marquand had rung the gong of commercial success on his first try, and he would keep on ringing it with awesome regularity for the rest of his life, writing nearly a hundred more stories and serials for the *Saturday Evening Post* before turning to serious fiction in 1937 with *The Late George Apley*.

A simpler man might at this point have abandoned New England once and for all. Instead, Marquand showed his true masochistic colors by marrying into the Sedgwick family. Christina Sedgwick was the niece of Ellery Sedgwick, editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, and a member of a well-bred family closely identified with intellectual Boston. Beautiful, fragile, and unworldly, Christina was the very image of what had proved inaccessible to the young Marquand. Her family looked down on her

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husband-to-be from the greatest of heights. Had Marquand deliberately set out to make a bad marriage, he couldn't have been more successful. For the rest of his life he would tell bitter stories about the Sedgwicks, and this one, recounted by Philip Hamburger in his 1952 *New Yorker* profile of Marquand, is typical:

> One winter, he and his wife stayed with the Sedgwicks in Stockbridge. . . . Marquand was working in one room off the hall, and Christina's brother, A. C. Sedgwick, was working in another, directly opposite. Marquand was applying himself to a serial, Sedgwick to a novel called *Wind Without Rain*. Mrs. Sedgwick rapped on Marquand's door one afternoon and asked him if he would mind stopping work and taking her son's dog, Choufleur, out for its midafternoon walk. "He's writing, you know," she said.

By the time Marquand finally gave up on this preposterous marriage in 1935, he was firmly established as one of the top magazine writers of the day. The artistic limits within which he worked, of course, were extremely narrow. To be sure, it was possible to do serious work in the *Saturday Evening Post*. (F. Scott Fitzgerald, for instance, published "Babylon Revisted" in the *Post* during Marquand's heyday.) But Marquand's artistic ambitions were more modest. His stories and serials paid unswerving homage to what Clifton Fadiman would call "the bright tin divinity of the Happy Ending." Still, as his first full-length novel would show, he had mastered his craft, and his life, however exasperating, had given him a rich set of materials about which to write, as well as an intensely personal point of view from which to write about them.

SUBTITLED "A Novel in the Form of a Memoir," *The Late George Apley* is actually a parody of an old-fashioned life-and-letters biography. We learn in the foreword that "Horatio Willing," the ostensible author of the book, has undertaken the task of writing a memoir of his old friend George Apley. "It has been my privilege many times in the past to edit the notes and letters of other prominent Bostonians under the advice of the family," Willing announces at the outset. "In this case, as is usual in such matters, the advice of the family stands first. In this case, however, the advice is not usual." For John Apley, George's son, has asked Willing to write a more "distinctive" memoir than usual, one intended only for private circulation.

By using the character of Horatio Willing as an alter ego, Marquand is able to shed most of the techniques and mannerisms of the commercial writer and submerge himself completely in his material. (Marquand at one point even considered bringing out the first edition of *The Late George Apley* under "Willing"'s name.)

George Apley, like the hero of Henry James's story "The Beast in the Jungle," is the man to whom, despite his best efforts, nothing happens. As a senior at Harvard, he falls in love with an Irish girl named Mary Monahan. His imperious father breaks up the romance and drags George off to Europe for a grand tour. As a law student, he is found wanting in business sense by his father and uncle. ("As a cotton buyer he has not the shrewdness of soul, and when he sells he lacks the pliability, so necessary.") He is shunted off into a small legal practice of his own, his substantial inheritance placed in trust. He marries a plain blueblood who runs his life with an iron hand from dawn to dusk. He fritters his days away in board meetings. When he becomes involved in the "Save Boston Movement," he is framed by an unscrupulous Irishman and quickly retires from public life, living just long enough to see his son marry a divorcée and his daughter, still worse, a reporter.

These events are described through the pompous, frequently disapproving voice of Horatio Willing and the well-meaning, bewildered voice of Apley himself, who has left behind a diverse assortment of letters, papers, and memoirs which are quoted from at length. This narrative device permits Marquand to bring off his best effects entirely through indirection, often irresistibly sly, as when Apley discovers *Lady Chatterley's Lover* ("At first I was stunned but now, in my opinion, this book is a work of art") or goes a few fast rounds with John L. Sullivan as an undergraduate. But the overall effect is in the end quite grim, for George Apley is a man doomed by inheritance to lead an ineffectual, unsatisfactory life. "I am the sort of man I am," Apley says, "because environment prevented my being anything else." Horatio Willing quotes this remark with smug satisfaction on the first page of *The Late George Apley*, but the remainder of the book makes it perfectly clear that this is a confession not of aristocratic repose but of barely controlled despair.

Apley has its weaknesses. Marquand, to begin with, is not quite free of his old magazine tricks. (Mary Monahan reappears toward the end of the novel in true-blue *Saturday Evening Post* style to get Apley out of a scrape.) And the book's larger limitations are suggested by George Santayana, whose *The Last Puritan*, "a memoir in the form of a novel," provided the subtitle for *Apley*. Santayana received his advance copy in Rome, prompting these typically shrewd remarks:

> In comparing this picture with my memory of Boston society, it seems to me not so much exaggerated as too external, too verbal. Nice Boston people often talked like this, but they had more sense and more heart; they knew and understood everything, while keeping themselves under conventional restraints. Mr. Marquand's hero seems to me not so much Bostonian as provincial.

The externality of *The Late George Apley*, of course, is an inescapable function of Marquand's method. But there is nothing at all "external" about the ambivalence with which Marquand regards his hero. George Apley may be a useless man, but his life has a dignity that cannot be ignored. "I have

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always told the truth," Apley writes at the end of his life in a letter to his son. "I have never shirked standing by my convictions. I have tried to realize that my position demanded and still demands the giving of help to others. I have tried in my poor way to behave toward all men in a manner which might not disgrace that position. Now I can feel a humble sense of pride that I have done so." For all the malicious pleasure that *The Late George Apley* provides the reader at the expense of its helpless hero, one cannot begrudge Apley this calm acceptance of his destiny.

Marquand's irony thus acquires the additional tang of ambiguity, an ambiguity which directly reflects his own unsettled feelings about the Boston of his youth and adulthood, and no one who reads *Apley* at all attentively can possibly come away from it with the idea that Marquand was simply dismissing the "cold roast type" of Bostonian as unworthy.

The Late George Apley was received with enthusiasm by the reviewers, many of whom recognized and were impressed by the double edge of Marquand's satire. The book, in a particularly pleasing stroke of irony, was bought by the *Post* for serialization. Not only did it sell well, but it received the Pulitzer Prize for fiction, and though Marquand continued to write for the mass-magazine market, it quickly became clear that he would be able to earn a living as a serious writer.

Marquand symbolically reaffirmed his commitment to New England shortly after the publication of *The Late George Apley* by marrying another Boston blueblood, Adelaide Hooker. (This marriage turned out to be even more disastrous than Marquand's first one, and he finally fled with relief to Reno in 1958.) Not surprisingly, Marquand returned in his next two novels to the narrow world of Boston and its environs. *Wickford Point* (1939), which borrows from Somerset Maugham's *Cakes and Ale* the flashback technique that would subsequently become a Marquand trademark, is a maliciously funny tale of the New England aristocracy in vertiginous decline, while *H. M. Pulham, Esquire* (1941), sends up Harvard with equal flair.

Sinclair Lewis, who was greatly impressed by these three books, suggested that Little, Brown bring them out as an omnibus and provided the perfect title, "North of Grand Central." Most of Marquand's other contemporaries, following Lewis's lead, pegged him early on as a social satirist in the *Babbitt* vein. But while *Apley* and *Wickford Point* comfortably fit the comic mold, *H. M. Pulham, Esquire* is something more. Harry Pulham, the first-person narrator, is a Boston Babbitt who, like George Apley, is married to a rather plain and distinctly domineering woman, and his impervious earnestness is used to maximum comic effect. The chapter-by-chapter flashbacks of the earlier novel are adroitly consolidated into a single, central excursion into the past, and the theme of determinism is similarly encapsulated in the story of Pulham's inability to abandon Boston and marry Marvin Myles, the smart New York career woman he loves.

H.M. Pulham, Esquire was followed by a bad patch in Marquand's output for which World War II was at least partly to blame. Marquand had heretofore made little fictional use of his own wartime experiences, and he was too old to serve in this new war, making it impossible for him to write effectively about it from the inside. One feels that Marquand was fumbling for a new subject in the three novels he published during this period, *So Little Time* (1943), *Repent in Haste* (1945), and *B.F.'s Daughter* (1946). Here the narrative grip is less sure, the flashbacks clumsily negotiated, the satirical passages inconsistently integrated with the general flow. These are the novels for which Randall Jarrell's shrewd indictment of Marquand rings truest:

> Most of his books . . . seem versions of the same subjective fable, one designed to say to him and also to us: "You were right to do as you did; or if not right, still, you had no choice; or if you had a choice, still, it's the choice all of us necessarily make wrong: life's life. If only—but it doesn't matter. And . . . and it was all so long ago." The fable is told in a series of flashbacks, of sighs as elegiac, nostalgic, and wistfully submissive—as mannered and unvarying—as a Puccini opera. These flashbacks are not optional technique, but compulsory content: because of them the hero never has to make, in close-up, a clear choice to kiss or kill.

"I think it would be a good idea if you wrote a play," the dramatist Edward Sheldon wrote Marquand after the publication of *So Little Time* in 1943. "That medium would force you to feel acutely responsible for movement, climax, and drama." What Sheldon no doubt had in mind was a "well-made" play, and Marquand took his advice literally, teaming up with George S. Kaufman in 1944 to adapt *The Late George Apley* for the stage. The result, not surprisingly, was an uninspired piece of straight commercial theater. But Marquand seems to have benefited from the effort all the same, for his next novel, *B.F.'s Daughter*, is a good deal more neatly assembled than the sprawling *So Little Time*. And in 1949, with the war finally behind him, Marquand would finally bring his technique under complete control and discover the new subject which would decisively replace the Boston of his youth and early adulthood.

JOHN MARQUAND'S novels, as Millicent Bell's *Marquand: An American Life* demonstrates at length, are largely woven out of explicitly autobiographical material, so much so that they frequently caused friends, relatives, and acquaintances considerable embarrassment, more than a little of which was probably intended by the author. Moving systematically through his own chronology, Marquand had by 1949 arrived at the period of his own triumphs as a writer. But it is impossible to imagine him writing ornately Jamesian tales of the literary life, and what he did instead was both characteristic and highly

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original: he took as the subject matter of his later novels the theme of success itself.

Serious American novelists have had relatively little to say about the corporate world, and they typically shun the successful businessman altogether except in caricatures of the utmost lasciviousness, Theodore Dreiser being an obvious case in point. One notable exception to this rule, however, was James Gould Cozzens, who by 1949 had produced three major novels dealing with American professions, *Men and Brethren, The Just and the Unjust,* and *Guard of Honor.* Marquand reviewed *Guard of Honor* for the Book-of-the-Month Club *News* in 1948, describing it as the work of "a born writer." He was probably also aware of Cozzens's earlier books, if only through Brandt & Brandt, his literary agency. (Bernice Baumgarten, Cozzens's wife, was head of the book department at Brandt & Brandt from 1926 to 1957, and Carol Brandt, Carl Brandt's wife, was Marquand's lover for many years.)

WHATEVER the source of his interest, Marquand took up the subject of professional success to persuasive effect in his 1949 novel *Point of No Return.* The framing action of the story occurs during four days in mid-April, 1947. Charles Gray, an ambitious young junior officer at the Stuyvesant Bank in New York, is competing with another officer for a coveted vice-presidency which has opened up at the bank. We see Charles at work during a typical Tuesday. The next day he travels on business for the bank to Clyde, Massachusetts, where he was born and raised. On Friday Charles finally learns that the promotion is his.

A long flashback reveals that Charles is the oldest son of a middle-class Clyde family. His father, John Gray, was an ineffectual, frustrated man who frittered away thousands of dollars in foolish investments. After graduating from Dartmouth and returning to Clyde to work, Charles fell in love with Jessica Lovell, the only daughter of one of Clyde's most prestigious citizens. The match was socially impossible. But instead of meekly accepting his place in Clyde society, Charles quit his job in town and went to work at a bond house in Boston with the sole intention of earning enough money to marry Jessica. At the same time his father came into a substantial inheritance and began playing the stock market in earnest. The year was 1929. The inevitable took place. Charles's father committed suicide, and the money Charles had earned in Boston went into the Gray estate to prevent a public scandal. His engagement to Jessica was broken, and he left Clyde forever, resolved to succeed in the larger world of New York.

Walker Percy has argued that the opening section of *Point of No Return* merits comparison with Kafka as a study of alienation. The comparison, though inappropriately extravagant, is not without meaning. Marquand's heroes are invariably men who have become profoundly alienated from their pasts, their inheritances, their occupations. Charles Gray is no exception. A man of obvious intelligence and sensitivity, he realizes at the beginning of the novel that the values by which he lives are "contrived," that his suburban neighborhood and his prestigious job and his struggles for success are all in some unexplainable way unsatisfactory.

Charles's alienation is so profound, in fact, that at the very end of *Point of No Return,* when he is temporarily misled into thinking that the promotion will not go to him, his sensation is one of great relief. When, a few pages later, his actual destiny is revealed, his alienation becomes even more complete:

> There was a weight on Charles again, the same old weight, and it was heavier after that brief moment of freedom. In spite of all those years, in spite of all his striving, it was remarkable how little pleasure he took in final fulfillment. He was a vice-president of the Stuyvesant Bank. It was what he had dreamed of long ago and yet it was not the true texture of early dreams. . . . It had obviously been written in the stars, bound to happen, and he could not have changed a line of it, being what he was, and Nancy would be pleased, but it was not what he had dreamed.

Viewed from a technical standpoint, *Point of No Return* is quite impeccable. The satirical scenes are for the first time in Marquand's work wholly integrated into the overall texture of the novel. The framing action has the economy of a short story, while the long central flashback is handled with cinematic fluidity. Moreover, *Point of No Return* is one of the few genuinely convincing treatments of the business world to appear in fiction. Anyone who has traveled the long road that leads from a small-town childhood to an urban career will immediately appreciate the sympathetic accuracy with which Marquand has portrayed Charles Gray's transformation into a polished banker.

The central flashback, Marquand's most elaborately romantic exercise in nostalgia, perhaps leaves too little to the imagination. There is none of the sly indirection of *The Late George Apley* in *Point of No Return.* But explanation is, after all, the *raison d'être* of this novel, and Marquand's thoroughness eventually pays great dividends. For the first time in a Marquand novel the alienation of the protagonist is fully plumbed, the denouement wholly compelling. The central flashback demonstrates with absolute precision that there is no real opportunity to "kiss or kill," that Charles Gray had already traveled well beyond the point of no return by the time he fell in love with Jessica Lovell.

Point of No Return should have been recognized as the climax of John P. Marquand's career. But Marquand's critical stock had been on the decline ever since Edmund Wilson's 1945 attack on *Repent in Haste,* and his association with the Book-of-the-Month Club reinforced the growing assumption that his novels were simply not to be taken seriously. Even the newspaper reviews were uneven, and no important critic had anything to say, good or bad, about the book.

Particularly striking is the failure of the critics to read *Point of No*

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Return as a compelling indictment of the business world. Not only does the book seemingly argue for the ultimate emptiness of corporate success, it suggests that even an American businessman is capable of genuine alienation. But Marquand's ambivalence, once again, confounds the picture. For Charles Gray, like George Apley and Harry Pulham, comes across as an admirable man. His values may be "contrived," but they are meaningful ones all the same.

To be sure, Marquand has here played a telling joke on "the tin divinity of the Happy Ending." Charles Gray's happy ending proves to be almost tragic in its flatness. Nevertheless, the author of *Point of No Return* has taken all the "wrong" things seriously: work, class, material success, the corporate world itself. This is probably why so many critics so unhesitatingly rejected his claims to artistic seriousness. The narrowness of sympathy that made this rejection possible is also implicit in Randall Jarrell's "kiss-or-kill" dichotomy. A novel in which the protagonist had so clear a choice would have been less true to life, no matter which option was taken. Marquand argued instead that Charles Gray's choice was made for him by circumstances and that his resigned acceptance of the choice was an act of wisdom. It is this profoundly conservative vision of life that his critics must have found most obnoxious of all.

THOUGH Marquand had three more novels left in him, none would achieve the artistic success of *Point of No Return*. *Melville Goodwin, U.S.A.* (1951) returns unconvincingly to World War II and to the chapter-by-chapter flashbacks which had given Marquand such trouble in the past. In *Sincerely, Willis Wayde* (1955), which abandons flashback altogether for straight chronological narrative, the principal character is a ruthless businessman who, unlike Charles Gray, has no insight into his alienated condition, a promising idea which is fatally undermined by the caricature-like portrayal of the title character. And *Women and Thomas Harrow* (1958) is an accomplished but noticeably less compelling variation on *Point of No Return* in which the thematic material is more explicitly autobiographical and the treatment harsher, even misogynistic.

John P. Marquand died in 1960. The usual encomiums followed his death: the front-page obituary in the New York *Times*, the graceful tribute (by John Updike) in the "Notes and Comment" section of the *New Yorker*. But the long, virtually unbroken critical silence that followed suggested that posterity's view of his achievement would be far more jaundiced.

In retrospect, Marquand's artistic deficiencies are clear. His prose style is smooth but ultimately undistinguished, his unevenness conspicuous. These defects once again suggest Maugham, and the comparison bears taking a step further. Marquand, trying to persuade his eldest son not to adopt the expatriate's life after World War II, wrote in a letter as follows:

> Of all the people I know, only Americans, because of some sort of inferiority complex, keep attempting the impossible and keep trying to get away from their environment. This seems particularly true with women, not to mention lesbians and homosexuals. The American colony in Paris, Rome, and Peking, and anywhere else, is a pretty sad group on the whole.

One wonders if Marquand realized that he was echoing George Apley, who was what he was "because environment prevented my being anything else." For if Marquand is the American Maugham, then he is a Maugham who never left home. While Maugham's homosexuality obliged him to leave England and become a cool, detached observer, Marquand stayed in Boston, immersed in an environment he never fully accepted, unable in the end either to kiss or kill. While this immersion gives Marquand's fiction its distinctive tone, it also removes from it much of the tartness which is Maugham's most characteristic and satisfying quality.

On the other hand, Edmund Wilson notwithstanding, Marquand was clearly a novelist *de métier*. Nor did the author of *The Late George Apley* ever find it necessary, as Maugham did, to search for "anecdotes" and "material." His material was all around him. "I have," Marquand said in 1954, "written about a *galerie* of which I know, and I wish that all writers young and old would do the same." By staying home to face his compulsions, Marquand achieved a remarkable understanding of the narrow but intriguing society in which he moved and about which he wrote so penetratingly.

WILL his work last? *The Late George Apley, Wickford Point*, and *H.M. Pulham, Esquire*, all deft and amusing books about American society, certainly deserve to be kept alive. And so does *Point of No Return*, that remarkable, undervalued novel of postwar manners. Ten tries, four hits. Not a bad average for a poor boy from Newburyport High.

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Israel's Providential Men

Paul Johnson

THE CREATION of the state of Israel, one of the few events in our tragic century of which one can truthfully say, "This was a good work," invites serious thought about that curious historical no-man's land where spiritual and secular forces meet. From the moment Theodor Herzl conceived the Jewish state in 1895, to its actual proclamation by David Ben-Gurion in 1948, the odds against its coming into existence were always great and often overwhelming. Its birth has therefore some of the aura of a providential event, and even the group of men who made it possible, Herzl himself, Chaim Weizmann, Ben-Gurion, and Vladimir Jabotinsky, fervent secularists though they were, seemed at times unable to drive the power of the spirit from their minds. It was as though, somewhere in the background, the messiah was lurking, never quite making his appearance.

But who was the providential man? There were rival claimants. When Herzl first announced the coming Jewish state, he often found himself greeted by audiences of East European Jews with shouts of "David the King!" (According to tradition, the messiah will be descended from that biblical figure.) In his new and extremely thorough biography of Ben-Gurion,* the Israeli journalist Shabtai Teveth relates that it was in 1896 that the young David Joseph Gruen (as he then was) heard of the new redeemer: "a miraculous man, head and shoulders taller than other men, with beautiful features and a luminous face adorned with a long black beard . . . in a certain foreign town a messiah named Herzl had arrived." Teveth adds: "Ben-Gurion remembered this episode all his life, and he repeated his account of it time and again, always in the same words, as if it was a melody he loved to hear."

The memory was important to Ben-Gurion because he himself seems to have believed, from an early age, that he had a destiny as the messiah's alter ego, the second Herzl. Unfortunately he was short, and this rankled: he greatly resented the fact that his later rival, Weizmann, was tall like Herzl. But Ben-Gurion's head was enormous. The doctor told his father "that its sheer size, the height of the crown, and especially the distance between the ears were signs of incredible talents." The big head made up for the small stature as the self-identified stigmata of destiny. Ben-Gurion wrote with confidence in 1904:

> God or nature (for our purpose it's one and the same, whichever is the true power) endows the genius with sublime talents, not out of love for him, but from a desire to bestow upon the world sublime creations. . . . He brings into existence an intermediary . . . with the power to give such creations to the world. I trust in the future ahead of me.

He identified will power, or what he termed "divine will power, the will power of the gods," as Herzl's outstanding characteristic, his true messianic quality, and set about cultivating his own will as the means to enable him to act, as he put it, "on the grand scale."

The vision of himself as hero was necessarily egocentric. Teveth shows in great detail how other members of Ben-Gurion's family were made to play supporting roles. His father's job was to provide the money for his early Zionist activities. Most of his life Ben-Gurion was deeply in debt, but this never seems to have worried him: "God or nature" would provide. His wife Paula (who never addressed him as anything but "Ben-Gurion") supplied the emotional support, when he required it. So, from time to time, did other women, used and discarded as the need arose. Teveth relates that, in 1923, Ben-Gurion read Herzl's diary and exclaimed: "What a wretched family life this man had!" It was true: Zionism destroyed Herzl's marriage. But Ben-Gurion failed to note the extent to which a similar consciousness of destiny was making his own personal relationships so empty. All this aspect of Teveth's biography makes sad reading. One woman who had dealings with Ben-Gurion said that he was the most impersonal man she had ever met in her life.

WEIZMANN, the subject of a new and elegant biography by Norman Rose,† was likewise encouraged to believe in a special destiny. When he was born, his mother was told: "Leah-Rachel, you have borne a prince." She singled him out for special treatment, the infant Chaim being provided with shirts and nightgowns "of specially fine linen or silk."

Weizmann became not so much a messiah-figure as a *nasi*, the Hebrew word for prince. Once his scientific patents had made him a man of wealth, enhanced by shrewd financial advice from his friends, Simon Marks and Israel Sieff, creators of the great merchandising firm of Marks & Spencer, Weizmann brilliantly played the princely role. "His clothes cupboards at home," says Rose, "were bursting with shirts, socks, ties, and accessories." His pink silk underclothes came from Doucet's in Paris or Hamboro's in London, his superb suits from Savile Row. His Viafidis cigarettes were bought, "five hundred at a time," from The Egyptian in

PAUL JOHNSON's *most recent book,* A History of the Jews, *was reviewed by Martin Gilbert in our June issue. His earlier works include* Modern Times *and* A History of Christianity.

* *Ben-Gurion: The Burning Ground, 1886-1948,* Houghton Mifflin, 1024 pp., $40.00.

† *Chaim Weizmann: A Biography,* Viking, 520 pp., $24.95. See the review by David Vital in last month's COMMENTARY—ED.

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Bond Street. He lunched at the Savoy, rode in a chauffeur-driven Rolls-Royce, and lived in a magnificent London house, "serviced by a butler, a nurse-governess, a cook, and maids," where his wife Vera kept "the most select of Zionist political *salons*."

This technique of display, which Weizmann inherited from Herzl himself, was designed for the potentates he had to impress in order to create the diplomatic framework for Israel's foundation, and it worked. Even the great historian and Zionist Sir Lewis Namier, a ferocious critic of almost everyone, especially his fellow Jews, treated Weizmann with the reverence due to a prince. But the *nasi*'s family life, like Herzl's and Ben-Gurion's, was shadowed, and for the same reason. His son Benji, later a failure and near-alcoholic, complained bitterly: "It is high time this family was taken in hand by somebody, otherwise the Jews will have a national home but we shall have none at all."

That was part of the almost inevitable price of the consciousness of special destiny. So was the bitter feuding between the rival messiahs, between Ben-Gurion and Weizmann and between both and Vladimir Jabotinsky, leader of the Revisionist party within the Zionist movement. These three great men, united by their overwhelming belief that Israel could and would be born, were divided by their concept of the salient means to that end. For Weizmann it was diplomatic, for Jabotinsky military, for Ben-Gurion it was a bit of both, but above all the political-economic structure he was creating in Palestine through the Histadrut and the agricultural communes.

But reading these biographies, and a new life of Jabotinsky's greatest follower, Menachem Begin, by Amos Perlmutter,* I am left unsure as to how fundamental these differences of strategy were. It has often struck me that the great clashes recorded in the historical books of the Bible—between Saul and David, for instance, or within David's family—were matters more of temperament than of principle. So too with the founders of Israel. Teveth's exhaustive account of the first half-century of Ben-Gurion's Zionism (his book takes his hero up to the founding of the state) reveals him as an empiricist, not a socialist or a dogmatist of any kind. His successive changes of strategy were blazoned forth in his sartorial arrangements. First was the Zionist intellectual, not unlike Weizmann himself, with high starched collar and bow tie: Zion through brain power. Then came the revolutionary: Ben-Gurion *circa* 1905 not only treasured and toted guns but dressed the part in a high-necked Russian peasant *rubashka*, peaked cap, and broad leather belt with a pistol stuck in it. Then, just before World War I, when he thought the future of Zion lay through Istanbul, he dressed exactly like an enlightened Young Turk, in a stiff black suit with a red fez perched incongruously on his huge head. Finally came the open-necked white shirt, baggy trousers, and conscious informality of the labor leader. Underneath all these guises the essential Ben-Gurion remained: a man pursuing an inflexible end by whatever means seemed convenient at the time.

Ben-Gurion's carefully cultivated will power was enormous, and he was passionate and quite ruthless in exercising it, but there were times at least when he was remarkably openminded. Indeed, perhaps the most interesting chapter in Teveth's book is his account of the negotiations between Jabotinsky and Ben-Gurion in 1934 to heal the breaches in the Zionist movement, which included one mammoth meeting lasting fifteen-and-a-half hours. There were many reasons why the two men might have hated each other, notably the mysterious murder in 1933 of Ben-Gurion's friend Chaim Arlosoroff, which he believed to his dying day had been committed by a Revisionist. But the fact is that they did reach an agreement, and even after it was repudiated by Ben-Gurion's own people, he was able to write to Jabotinsky:

> It may be that we will have to remain on opposing sides, but whatever happens our talks in London will remain with me. . . . If we must battle each other, remember that among your "enemies" is a man who esteems you and feels your pain as his own. The hand you thought I withheld from you at our first meeting will be extended to you even in the heat of battle, and not only the hand.

To which Jabotinsky replied: "Go in peace."

Ben-Gurion remained convinced that building up a structure within Palestine was paramount, and that Jabotinsky's strategy of achieving statehood in one dramatic military move was quite unrealistic. But he came to see that Jabotinsky was right about the coming Holocaust, and the "combative Zionism" he adopted in 1939 was really his own version of Jabotinsky's military solution. It is important to note this because it strengthens Jabotinsky's rightful claim to be considered one of the principal creators of Israel.

Had Jabotinsky lived, indeed, the two might eventually have worked together, for they discovered in 1934 that the barrier of temperament was not insuperable. It was a different matter with Ben-Gurion and Weizmann. Indeed, as Teveth shrewdly observes, Ben-Gurion and Jabotinsky were able to agree in 1934 at least partly because "on one issue they saw eye to eye: disparagement of Weizmann."

Ben-Gurion's relations with the *nasi* over a period of over thirty years, well recorded in Rose's book, were immensely complex and fluctuating. Being an empiricist, and recognizing Weizmann's indispensability in the 20's and most of the 30's, Ben-Gurion forced himself to applaud. Weizmann, he wrote, was "the Chosen One." Or again (1935): "He is a *great man*. There is a holy flame in him." Weizmann's testimony to the Peel Commission, formed by Great Britain after the Arab riots of 1936 to in-

* *The Life and Times of Menachem Begin*, Doubleday, 444 pp., $21.95.

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quire into the future of Palestine, was "the most profound and penetrating analysis ever given to the plight of the Jewish people. . . . I do not think there is in the whole of Zionist literature anything as profound, as awe-inspiring, as penetrating or as true."

From time to time Ben-Gurion sent Weizmann testimonials to his virtues so fulsome that they can only be described as love letters. Yet at other times he saw him as a foreigner, an assimilated Jew who did not want to live in any Zionist state, who had "lost all personal feelings for the *yishuv*." He was "the most dangerous figure in Zionism," a man who could not be trusted, who would surrender points which would make impossible the creation of the state. To Ben-Gurion, finally, Weizmann might be a Zionist but he was not and could never become an Israeli. As his indispensability declined, the empirical Ben-Gurion, with some satisfaction, downgraded the *nasi* and eventually, after the founding of Israel, pushed him into an impotent presidency, making Weizmann a constitutional monarch who reigned but did not rule.

PART of Ben-Gurion's desire for revenge arose from the fact that his love letters had remained unanswered. Any contempt he had for Weizmann was more than reciprocated. To the *nasi*, Ben-Gurion was, and remained, a petty labor leader, grown too big for his boots and posturing as a pseudo-messiah. "I have watched Mr. Ben-Gurion carefully during his stay here," Weizmann wrote in 1942 from New York in a letter to the Jewish Agency Executive (the letter, twice drafted, was never sent):

> His conduct and deportment were painfully reminiscent of the petty dictator, a type one meets with so often in public life now. They are all shaped on a definite pattern: humorless, thin-lipped, morally stunted, fanatical and stubborn, apparently frustrated in some ambition, and nothing is more dangerous than a small man nursing his grievances introspectively.

Ben-Gurion, Weizmann added, saw himself "as the self-appointed guardian of pure Zionist principles. . . . He alone has the solution to the Zionist and Jewish problem, he alone is conscious of the tragic plight of our people." "I'm quite certain," he wrote to another correspondent, "that he is developing fascist tendencies and megalomania coupled with political hysteria."

In short, the temperamental differences were irreconcilable. If, to Ben-Gurion, Weizmann was a grandee who had no conception of Palestinian realities, then to Weizmann, Ben-Gurion was an excitable, unbalanced nonentity, wholly unworthy of any great role in history. He retained this view to the end: Ben-Gurion, he wrote in 1950, "is not fit to be a shoemaker, let alone a prime minister."

THE contempt Weizmann showed to him Ben-Gurion directed, in turn, at Menachem Begin. Jabotinsky (who died in 1940) he might respect and argue with as an equal; but Jabotinsky's heir was a nothing. Jabotinsky was big enough to be abused as "Hitler"; Begin was just a "bespectacled Polish solicitor," a "clown." Their relations were for decades inflamed by the miserable affair of the *Altalena*, a ship Begin was using to bring in arms for his Irgun during the War of Independence and which Ben-Gurion in June 1948 destroyed by gunfire, confiscating its cargo. Amos Perlmutter quotes an exchange between the two men on this subject in the Knesset in 1955, which perfectly brings out their relationship, Begin raging at the great man, Ben-Gurion responding *de haut en bas*, not without amusement. *Begin* (almost beside himself with fury): "He had ordered to shoot at me with a cannon." *Ben-Gurion*: "I was the man who issued the order for a holy cannon to fire on the ship." *Begin*: "You will be called to justice for it." *Ben-Gurion*: "We voted to destroy the *Altalena* and our decision came to fruition." *Begin*: "The words, the deed, is that you spilled innocent blood." *Ben-Gurion*: "Blessed be the cannon that blew up this ship. If the Temple were built again, there could be no better place for it."

Begin was the natural underdog for the first generation of Israel's existence, dominated as it was by the tightly-meshed political, economic, and trade-union state complex that Ben-Gurion had patiently created. Initially, at least, Begin had nothing to go on but his own persistence, well brought out in Perlmutter's biography. Indeed, he must be the only politician in the history of democracy to lose seven elections in a row and still survive. But survive he did, thanks to the same power of will which Ben-Gurion had noted in Herzl and cultivated in himself.

Although Ben-Gurion began by treating Begin as an outsider in the new state, in the 1960's Ben-Gurion lost control of the new state himself, and turned on it; and in the meantime Begin had been joined in Israel by more and more outsiders like himself—Jews who came not from Poland as he did but from the Arab territories, and who had an equal antipathy to the ruling Labor establishment. In due course these outsiders became a majority, and in 1977 put Begin in power at last.

IT SAYS a lot for Ben-Gurion's empiricism and fundamental open-mindedness that, long before this, he had recognized Begin's growing importance and claim to respect. In 1970, as a result of a chance meeting, they lunched together in the King David Hotel in Jerusalem and afterward Ben-Gurion wrote to Begin:

> Paula, my wife, was for some reason an admirer of yours. I opposed your road sometimes strongly—both before the state and after it arose—exactly as I would have opposed the road of Jabotinsky. I strongly objected to a number of your actions and opinions after statehood, and I do not regret my opposition. For in my opinion I was in the right. But personally I never harbored any grudge against you, and as I got to know you better over recent years my esteem for you grew and my Paula rejoiced in it.

The compliment was distinctly

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backhanded but Begin nonetheless relished it greatly. He must also have known, later, that no one would have been more thankful for his own successful peacemaking with Egypt than Ben-Gurion, who had always seen Egypt as the greatest single threat to Israel's existence.

There is, indeed, something biblical in the battles among Israel's founders and pioneers, and the way in which their enmities were eventually submerged by time and chance and the slow erosion of events. All of them in different ways were outsized characters, touched by messianic delusions—or qualities, if you like. All made essential contributions to the creation and survival of the state. Together, they give the lie emphatically to the claims of determinists that history is made by impersonal forces rather than great individuals. Israel, like most other nations, was built by inspired egoism.

Beyond Glasnost

Walter Laqueur

LITERARY periodicals are in great demand these days in the Soviet Union, and issues of particular interest are sold out in hours, if not in minutes. The reason is not any sudden upsurge of curiosity about poetry, fiction, or literary criticism but simply that, as in 19th-century Russia, literature in the Soviet Union provides a framework within which views can be expressed that cannot be aired in other venues—even at a time, like the present, of relative relaxation. Thus, the literary journal *Novy Mir* has published articles about the state of the Soviet economy, about the accuracy of Soviet statistics, and about other such topics which none of the general or professional journals would have dared to touch.

One literary monthly, *Druzhba Narodov* ("Friendship of the Peoples"), has recently published the third and last part of Anatoli Rybakov's *Children of the Arbat*, a novel that even before it appeared was being hailed as the great political and literary event of the year. Rybakov, now in his seventies, is best known as the author of books for children and adolescents. Some ten years ago, however, he published *Heavy Sands*, an extraordinary novel (by Soviet standards) about the sad fate of a Jewish community in a small town under German occupation in World War II. As I noted at the time in a review of the book in COMMENTARY (June 1980), *Heavy Sands* is not a great work of art, nor does it contain anything new or startling to the Western reader. But in Soviet terms Rybakov had gone as far as he possibly could, and it was a brave thing to do. *Heavy Sands* subsequently appeared in eighteen foreign languages, including English; if there was a single review of the novel inside the Soviet Union, I have missed it.

Children of the Arbat, which was originally written in the 1960's but could not appear until now, is in a different literary class altogether, and it has already been highly praised by some of Rybakov's peers. (The weekly *Ogonyok* published some ten personal letters to Rybakov by leading writers and critics in which adjectives like "grandiose," "colossal," and "Shakespearean" abound.) It is the story of a generation: the young men and women who lived in central Moscow in the early 1930's. Arbat, to the west of the Kremlin, is one of the oldest parts of the Soviet capital. Originally an upper-class neighborhood, it eventually acquired something of the chic-bohemian tone of Paris's St.-Germain-des-Prés, and was made Moscow's first pedestrian zone. Some of its old character is still preserved amid the high-rise buildings of today, although most of those who live there now are in their sixties and seventies.

Rybakov's novel has two protagonists: a (fictional) student named Sasha Pankratov, and Stalin. Sasha is handsome, a good son and friend, reasonably intelligent, an enthusiast—terribly naive and a bit of a prig. As a young Communist he commits some minor ideological gaffe when preparing a wall newspaper at his college. Although normally this sort of thing would be dismissed, or incur a mild admonition, unbeknownst to Sasha the organs of state security have been building up a case against an old Bolshevik and in a roundabout way he becomes implicated in the

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frame-up. Thus a student's prank is transformed into an act of treason; Sasha is arrested and is sentenced (leniently) to three years of administrative exile in Siberia. Poor Sasha does not, of course, understand what has happened to him, and believes that it is all a horrible misunderstanding which could be immediately rectified—if only comrade Stalin knew.

Prison and Siberia cure him only in part of his naiveté. When a machine in the local kolkhoz (collective farm) breaks down, Sasha volunteers to repair it, warning everyone in earshot that it will fail again unless new parts are secured. In the heat of a quarrel he also calls the chairman of the kolkhoz a fool. The machine duly breaks down again, conveniently no one remembers Sasha's warning, and the chairman brings a criminal action against him for deliberately wrecking the socialist economy—a crime punishable by between ten years and life.

Now the local head of the KGB, a fine person of much experience and originally an enthusiast like Sasha, takes pity on the young man and patiently explains to him some of the ground rules of Soviet society: never volunteer if there is the slightest risk that things may go wrong, never call anyone in authority a fool. "'You may call him a son of a whore, or worse; this will be forgotten. But never, under any circumstances, must you undermine his authority."

Thanks to this guardian angel, Sasha escapes serious trouble. For there is no doubt that he does need protection. His friends and family (with the exception of his mother) have scarcely exerted themselves to help him. In fact, with two exceptions his contemporaries, the young enthusiasts of 1934, do not appear to be an attractive lot, and the worst character in his circle, an out-and-out careerist, joins the secret police.

In the parts of the novel devoted to these young people Rybakov's description of the mores of Moscow society is excellent. Siberia, on the other hand, he portrays a little colorlessly. But in any case where this novel truly comes alive is as a superb psychological study of its second protagonist, Stalin.

In the 1950's, under Khrushchev, Stalin was denounced for having encouraged the "cult of the individual" and for "deviating from the norms of socialist legality." Considering the enormity of his crimes, this was mild enough, but later under Brezhnev the euphemisms were toned down still farther, and indeed Stalin's reputation was partly restored. Even today Stalin has his admirers both among the leadership and the common people. They will not like this novel. Rybakov portrays a man who genuinely believes in Russia and in Communism but who also happens to be a lunatic and a criminal; a politician who comes to power not through far-sightedness, oratorical skill, personal charisma, or other qualities of genuine leadership but who simply is more brutal and cunning and morally uninhibited than his colleagues in the Politburo, and who ultimately outmaneuvers and liquidates all but the most servile toadies among them.

Rybakov imitates Stalin's style of speech very effectively, especially the constant habit of posing rhetorical questions ("Is it conceivable that comrade Kirov did not know about the nefarious activities of the opposition under his own nose?" "No, it is inconceivable." Etc.). And he has certainly done his historical homework: the story he tells is largely authentic, and it will serve well to replace the Soviet histories of the 30's which were never written. If the names of the second- and third-rank party leaders in this novel will mean something to Western experts, they will come as a surprise to readers in the Soviet Union, where the archives are closed and the figures in question have been unpersons for a long time.

The tale Rybakov unfolds is all but unrelievedly grim, although it does have its gruesomely light moments. Thus, while relaxing at his villa at Sochi, Stalin suddenly comes down with a toothache; his personal dentist, a man by the name of Lipman, has to be flown in from Moscow. There ensues an inner conflict as Stalin must reconcile his desire to be feared by everyone with his need for a dentist whose hands do not tremble. After various complications the leader is indeed fitted with a new bridge; but Lipman himself is not so fortunate. One morning on the Sochi beach Lipman happens to meet Sergei Kirov, number-two man on the Politburo, the darling of the party, but whom Stalin plans to liquidate politically and physically. Next, Kirov tells Stalin about his meeting with the dentist; whereupon Stalin, sensing a conspiracy, immediately gives orders to remove Lipman from the Kremlin medical unit.

Does Rybakov have nothing at all positive to say about Stalin? Actually, there does seem to be an underlying suggestion in the novel that his iron fist was somehow indispensable to the development of the Soviet state, and that "objectively" he may therefore have played a certain positive role. Whether Rybakov himself subscribes to this line of thought it is difficult to say; pseudo-objectivity of this kind may be the price for the publication of a book like *Children of the Arbat* in the first place. But it could be that Rybakov does believe it, for he is himself a member of the generation of which he writes, a generation of people who, though totally disillusioned, still find it difficult to accept that Stalinism had no redeeming features.

In this respect, *Children of the Arbat*, moving and powerful as it is, falls short of telling the whole truth; it is a story that is not brought to its appropriate conclusion. The novel proper—there is an epilogue that flashes forward several years—comes to an end on the very eve of the Kirov assassination in 1934, an event which triggered off the mass arrests, trials, and executions, and the effect is a little like *War and Peace* ending before the battle of Borodino or the burning of Moscow.

How typical, a Western reader may ask, is the story of Rybakov's young Sasha? How many people, altogether, were affected by the "repression" of the 30's? More or less simultaneously with the publication of *Children of the Arbat*, unofficial fig-

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ures covering the number of victims of arrest, purge, and deportation during this period were for the first time given out in Moscow. They must have caused bewilderment among some revisionist American scholars who have been arguing that longstanding Western estimates of millions of dead in the purges are "grossly inflated," and that no more than a few tens of thousands died. Some of our political scientists have gone even farther, raising doubts as to whether mass arrests in fact took place at all, or whether the whole episode may be rather a figment of our imagination. Books like Rybakov's, together with the new Soviet estimates of up to seventeen million victims, cannot come as welcome news to these Western experts, who will now have to think of reasons to doubt their veracity.

The attitude of most Soviet historians has been similar: they too do not like the new literature of which *Children of the Arbat* is such a striking example. Indeed, among proponents of *glasnost* in general, specialists in Soviet history have been conspicuous by their absence; they have either remained silent or have actually engaged in counterattack. It seems doubtful that this will change soon. Those among the historians who are pro-Stalin may perhaps revert to the line prevailing in the days of Khrushchev, but beyond this they are neither willing nor able to go. And so the Soviet reading public will face an interesting phenomenon: one version of Stalin in their history books and another, quite different, in a few historical novels.

THE bittersweet epilogue to *Children of the Arbat* describes a chance meeting at the front toward the end of the war between Sasha, now a major in a Guards division, and his old friend Maxim who early on in the novel had joined the army and now has risen to the rank of general. They warmly embrace and drink to the memory of their less fortunate comrades who did not survive. Sasha confides to his friend that his personal file carries the notation of his once having received a sentence under paragraph 58 (treason and crimes against the state), which is to say that he will remain forever vulnerable. Since in a subsequent volume Rybakov intends to carry his story beyond the end of the war, up to the 20th Party Congress (1956), at which Khrushchev made his famous speech denouncing Stalin, one already foresees new tribulations for our hero.

Not so long ago happy endings were *de rigueur* for Soviet books; if a story or a play did not end well, at the very least the author was obliged to call it an "Optimistic Tragedy." In recent years Soviet literature (and to a lesser extent Soviet movies) has become far more interesting but also far less optimistic. There have been complaints by party authorities about these "negative trends" in contemporary literature, as "socialist realism" has given way to realism *tout court*. And certainly the picture that emerges is a bleak one —so bleak that a reader sometimes suspects that conditions cannot truly be as depressing as they are described in, say, Viktor Astafiev's novel *The Sad Detective*, or people as nasty to each other as they are in the stories of Fyodor Abramov.

The Soviet people still have to come to terms with their past, and Rybakov's book is a milestone on this painful road. But they also have to look forward—and this is likely to prove even more difficult. Gorbachev's exhortations notwithstanding, one does not find much optimism in Soviet cultural life these days. Some leading writers preach a (slightly veiled) return to religion; others call for getting rid of "cosmopolitans," rock-and-roll, moral and physical pollution, or the drug peddlers and the *mafiosi* who dominate not only the Central Asian Republics, the restaurants and food shops, and the drivers' cooperatives but even the cemeteries (as described in novels by Chingíz Aitmátov, Aleksandr Bek, Ilya Stamler, and Serge Kaledin respectively). Gorbachev himself wants to enlist the aid of writers in rekindling the enthusiasm of the 1920's and early 30's, when even the young Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn was an ardent Communist, when (we are told) the spirit of voluntarism and of sacrifice was strong, when people were poor but helped each other and showed consideration and *miloserdie* (charity).

But where will the inspiration and new idealism come from? Not, one suspects, from the burned children of the Arbat or their offspring. The Soviet Union certainly needs *glasnost*, but it needs a cultural revolution even more. Indeed, it is on this that the future of the Soviet Union will depend, far more than on changes in labor laws or the decentralization of economic planning. So far, although all sorts of interesting proposals have been advanced, even the most fervent proponents of "openness" would not claim that the Soviet Union is anywhere near such a cultural revolution.

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Portrait of the Artist

HEMINGWAY. By KENNETH S. LYNN. *Simon & Schuster. 702 pp. $24.95.*

Reviewed by JEFFREY HART

ERNEST HEMINGWAY began as a miniaturist, writing highly concentrated vignettes and very short stories, all of them full of multiple shaded meanings. During the 1920's literary critics like Edmund Wilson regarded him, rightly, as a hero of art. His discipline was taut, his prose concentrated to an unprecedented degree. After 1930, however, the "sportsman" supervened, with tedious accounts of safaris and game fishing appearing regularly in the pages of *Esquire*; Wilson wrote then that Hemingway had developed an ominous resemblance to Clark Gable, and was his own worst invented character. In "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" (1936), he made a sensational recovery, even though the story was in fact about his own artistic disintegration, a process confirmed in *To Have and Have Not* (1937). With the huge best-seller *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940) contemporary opinion diverged, but the public believed, and some critics as well, that Hemingway had written his masterpiece.

Then came the war. Hemingway covered D-Day and Normandy, and preceded the French General LeClerc into Paris, where he allegedly liberated the Ritz bar. During the postwar years, his "big book," eagerly awaited, never arrived. *Across the River and Into the Trees* (1950) was a disaster, somewhat recouped in 1952 by *The Old Man and the Sea* and the Nobel Prize for Literature. But as we now know from his recent biographers and from those who have seen the unpublished manuscripts at the Kennedy Library in Boston, the true story of Ernest Hemingway in the years after World War II and leading up to his suicide in 1961 was one of catastrophic moral and mental decline.

Kenneth S. Lynn's new biography of Hemingway—a book spectacular in the thoroughness of its research, in its analytical energy, and in its intellectual love of its subject—marks the culmination of a change in our biographical-critical understanding of who Hemingway was and what he achieved as an artist. The first major attempt at a definitive Hemingway biography was published by the late Carlos Baker in 1969. It remains indispensable; yet it conceals, except here and there between the lines, Hemingway's Jekyll-and-Hyde viciousness to virtually everyone around him, a viciousness in which the Hyde predominated to a terrifying degree as time went on. Carlos Baker probably had to suppress this material, which certainly was available to him from the people he interviewed, in order to retain the necessary cooperation of Hemingway's widow Mary, who knew all the horrors but who also controlled the papers and wished to preserve what was left of the façade of her relationship with her late husband.

In his 1985 biography, Jeffrey Meyers let all of the horror spill out: the mounting daily cruelty, physical violence, gun threats, threats of suicide, prodigious alcoholism, public insults, continuous drunken infidelity. Kenneth Lynn records even more horrors than Meyers turned up, and others could add still more. And yet, knowing the full story, Lynn still has the charity to conclude that "while [Hemingway's] faults were terrible he was also a more truly heroic figure than even the gaudiest version of his myth would grant him." Lynn means that by his art Hemingway held his powerful psychological demons at bay, at least for a while.

Lynn's book has a clear and controversial central thesis concerning the biographical source for the notorious sense of dread and nightmare that lurks beneath the surface of Hemingway's prose. Contrary to a host of critics—Malcolm Cowley, Edmund Wilson, Philip Young, and others—he holds that it derives not from a famous wound Hemingway sustained at Fossalta di Piave while serving as an ambulance driver in World War I, but from a much more comprehensive wound delivered to him in early childhood by his parents, Clarence and Grace Hemingway. "Hemingway's hurt began in childhood and expanded until his death. . . . Uncertain to the point of fear about himself, he was compelled to write stories in which he endeavored to cope with the disorder of his inner world by creating fictional equivalents for it." Before he was shot down by the Austrian *Minenwerfer* (minethrower), Hemingway was shot down in Oak Park, Illinois, a place he ever after "hated."

His mother was imperious and sexually ambiguous, and bullied his father, who was (ironically) an obstetrician. The child Ernest was dressed as a girl and treated as the "twin" of his slightly older sister Marcelline. Grace kept the male child in her own bed. Yet she encouraged his efforts at masculinity, praising him when he would pipe up that he was "'fraid a nothing." Caught up in the contradictory emotions imposed by a powerful female personality, the child developed huge fears. At the same time, his father was a weakling. Dominated by Grace—you can enjoy the pun if you want to—he both taught his son to hunt and fish and also submitted to henpecking, and later he committed suicide. The mixture was potent. All his life Hemingway hated and also wanted to be loved by his mother, at the same time wanting to prove himself better than his father, whom he despised but in so many ways emulated.

Lynn is persuasive in assembling these biographical data, and he is

JEFFREY HART *is professor of English at Dartmouth. His most recent book is* From This Moment On: America in 1940, *which has just been published by Crown.*

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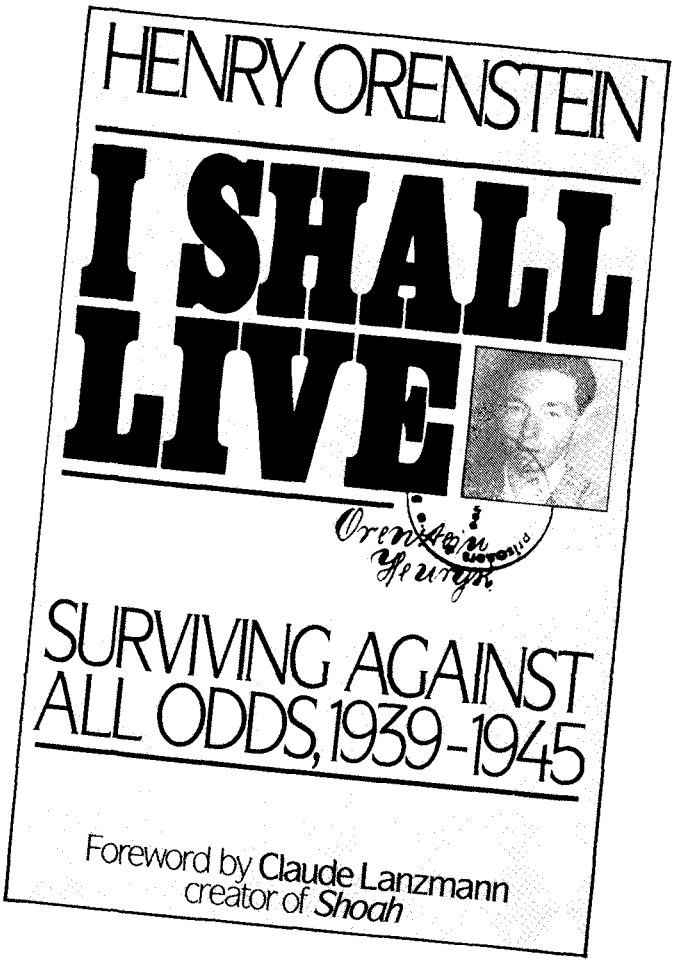

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(Former director of the Office of Special Investigations of the Justice Department)

"*I Shall Live* is a poignant and deeply moving testament to the human spirit, and to ferocious courage in the face of hopelessness... No reader can be left untouched by it."

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highly illuminating as he pursues his biographical approach through the stories and novels. Again and again he makes the connections between the life and the art in close rereadings of such stories as "Now I Lay Me," "Indian Camp," and the crucial "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife." If I nevertheless differ somewhat with him on the relative weights of the two "wounds," it is not because I think him wrong about the nature of Hemingway's childhood trauma, but only that I believe the war wound should not be minimized out of existence.

Lynn argues that Hemingway exaggerated the seriousness of the 1918 wound, perhaps to cover up the "real" wound, and that countless critics foolishly took him at his word. He convincingly shows on ballistic evidence that Hemingway could not have been hit by a machine-gun bullet, as he claimed. But he is less convincing when he argues that the multiple shrapnel wounds Hemingway undoubtedly did receive must therefore have been psychologically minor. Whatever Grace and Clarence did to imbue their son with his ambiguous sense of mortal dread—and Lynn shows they did plenty—it is not only they who are present in the shadows of *In Our Time* (1925), the collection of stories and vignettes revolving around the Hemingway surrogate Nick Adams, in which that sense of dread figures almost as a protagonist. The war, or war itself, is pervasive, too. Indeed, what *In Our Time* does is seek to break down the conventional distinction between war and peace. Everyone in the book is at war, even during peacetime. Psychological bullets fly in these stories, but real bullets fly, too.

THERE are so many things in Lynn's rich study that only a sampling is possible here. Lynn informs us, or at least me, that Hemingway identified himself from childhood with Theodore Roosevelt, Rough Rider, big-game hunter, and of course masculine hero. At the Chicago Museum of Natural History, Hemingway as a child haunted the Hall of African Mammals. He wore khakis and imagined that he was TR on safari. When he finally earned enough money to go on his own safaris, his guide was the hunter Philip Percival, who a generation earlier had actually guided TR. The brush mustache, wide grin, and restless energy that typified Hemingway owed a good deal, it seems, to a deliberate emulation of the Rough Rider.

Yet beneath the ebullience and bonhomie, as we have learned, there existed a feral, sick viciousness, and it was directed not least at Hemingway's fellow writers. From his early attack on his mentor, Sherwood Anderson, to his attack—full of lies—on F. Scott Fitzgerald in the posthumously published *A Moveable Feast* (1964), he tried to vilify and denigrate virtually everyone in his fraternity. Both Anderson and Fitzgerald had befriended him, and before anyone had heard of him they had promoted him as a writer. Yet Hemingway subjected both to calumny. He was also indebted, thematically and technically, to T.S. Eliot, yet he said in print that he would like to grind Eliot into powder.

Even by the loose standards of his own generation, Hemingway was a far-out anti-Semite. The character Robert Cohn of Princeton in *The Sun Also Rises* is a billiard-shot off Scott Fitzgerald, a Catholic Princetonian; Hemingway is intimating that Fitzgerald is the social equivalent of a Jew, that is, a pariah. The word "kike" flows steadily through his correspondence and conversation. The publisher Horace Liveright saw the greatness of *In Our Time* and published it in 1925, but when Hemingway wanted to break his contract with Liveright in favor of Scribner's, Liveright became a "Jew publisher." The story "Fifty Grand" contains an anti-Semitic rage disguised as a drunken tirade, with a shot at Gertrude Stein as "Steinfelt." As Lynn puts it, gently enough, Hemingway was "a much more self-controlled bigot than his friend Ezra Pound," but the fact of the matter is that here as elsewhere he was a ghastly bully, the obverse side of his deep insecurity.

Lynn is the first Hemingway biographer of importance to be straightforward about Hemingway's 1936-39 Communist phase. He never joined the party, but he was a Stalinist, and out of ignorance and opportunism he worked hand-in-glove with the Comintern as a willing propagandist and apologist. He removed his name from the masthead of an independent leftist magazine because it had published an anti-Stalinist cartoon. He broke with his friend, the novelist John Dos Passos, when Dos Passos protested the Stalinists' murder during the Spanish Civil War of José Robles, a mutual friend. On the whole subject of Spain, until 1939, when it dawned on him how he was being taken in, Hemingway was a "Republican" only in the Communists' sense of the word.

THERE are many other discoveries and sharp insights in Lynn's *Hemingway*, illuminating to both the general reader and the specialist alike. And they are hardly all detrimental to his subject's reputation. Indeed, the greatest virtue of this biography is that it vividly reminds us how, despite everything—the vanity, the cruelty, the alcoholism, the physical disasters, and even despite the catastrophic loss of his powers as a writer that intensified unstoppably after World War II—Hemingway yet commanded a special music that still holds the power to thrill and delight.

Washington vs. Manila

WALTZING WITH A DICTATOR: THE MARCOSES AND THE MAKING OF AMERICAN POLICY. By RAYMOND BONNER. *Times Books. 533 pp. $19.95.*

Reviewed by GEORGE RUSSELL

SUDDENLY, it seems, nobody in the West wants strongmen any more. From South Korea to Haiti to Panama, authoritarian regimes that once seemed eminently solid are getting a substantial shake-

GEORGE RUSSELL *is an associate editor of* Time *magazine. His article, "Can the Sandinistas Still be Stopped?," appeared in our July issue.*

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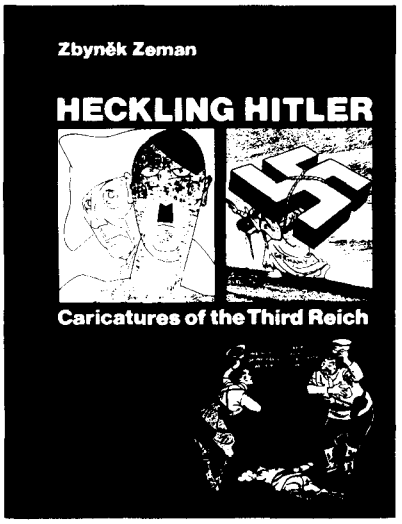

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down. Militarized anti-Communism is out. Elections and middle-class participation are in.

The most important case of this phenomenon to date is the strange, convoluted, and turbulent saga of Ferdinand E. Marcos in the Philippines. A special authoritarian in a special country, Marcos, together with his wife, the grasping, voluble Imelda, is now a spectral presence on the ash-heap of history. Meanwhile, in the Philippines, a very real, very dangerous battle continues over control of the forces unleashed in the Marcos overthrow. Down the road is still the substantial prospect of a civil war *à la* El Salvador between the government of Corazon Aquino (or its successor, of whatever stripe) and the Communist New People's Army. With or without Marcos, the Marcos legacy promises to be with us for a very long time.

ANALYZING that legacy is certainly a matter of vital importance for the United States, where the question of how to define and defend national interests is so often bandied about under the false heading of dictatorship vs. democracy. And in fact an avalanche of literature dealing with the triumph of Mrs. Aquino is headed our way as fast as publishers can push the manuscripts through their word processors. It is the great good fortune of almost all of these publishers that the first entry past the post is Raymond Bonner's *Waltzing With a Dictator*, for it is bound to make many subsequent offerings, whatever their other merits or deficiencies, appear reflective and thoughtful by contrast.

Thoughtfulness and reflection do not seem to be Bonner's style. A one-time Marine and subsequently a lawyer for Ralph Nader's consumerist movement, Bonner stumbled into journalism almost by happenstance. He has since become a noted practitioner of what might be called "accusatory journalism," a sometimes profitable form of populist expatiation. His habitual target, as in his previous book, *Weakness and Deceit: U.S. Policy and El Salvador*, is the foreign policy-making apparatus of the American government. A former New York *Times*-man in Central America, Bonner became something of a *cause célèbre* in the early 80's when his reportage was felt by conservatives to be carrying a trifle too much water for the Marxist-Leninist guerrillas of El Salvador. And truth to tell, if *Weakness* and *Waltzing* are anything to go by, Bonner has rarely come across a guerrilla movement he does not admire, except, one guesses, the Nicaraguan *contras*.

Bonner is a formidably energetic journalist, as well as a remarkably biased and muddled one. He has spared no effort, including some that clearly should have been spared, to prove that the entire period of Marcos's "constitutional authoritarianism," dating from his 1972 invocation of martial law to his 1986 overthrow, was the fault of the U.S. In fact, Bonner is happy to charge quite a bit more: that virtually everything wrong with the Philippines over the past ninety years or so can be traced to American greed, desire for strategic advantage (the Clark Air Force and Subic Bay military bases), or simple racism.

Perhaps Bonner's most startling accusation is that Marcos's plan to invoke martial law in the Philippines was made known to, and tacitly approved by, President Richard M. Nixon. As Bonner puts it:

> Marcos said afterward that he had "prayed to God for guidance" before making the fateful decision. Contrary to what was officially stated, he had also consulted with Washington, specifically with the President of the United States, Richard M. Nixon. In the days before his proclamation of martial law Marcos spoke with Nixon at least once, telling the American President what he was about to do. He heard no objection.

Leaving aside the lawyerly ambiguity of that last sentence, one might well wonder about the proof of this interesting revelation. It boils down to a couple of remarks: one, said to have been made by Marcos to an aide the day after

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declaring martial law; and the other, at third hand, by Marcos's foreign minister to another party who later passed the story on to Bonner. For Bonner, the final proof of the pudding is the assessment of a senior CIA official (we must take Bonner's word for his status) who infers that Marcos "'just would not have gone ahead without some assurance that he was not going to get clobbered.' And that assurance, this CIA officer says, could have come only from Nixon."

All in all, quite an inferential ziggurat, especially considering that Bonner devotes much effort in the rest of his book to showing that Ferdinand Marcos was among other things a dedicated and accomplished liar. This spotlighted charge, however, says a great deal about Bonner's journalistic methods. He is a journalist to whom the word "alleged" is a foreign locution. He is also one for whom hearsay, the say-so of one disgruntled official over another, or the testimony of a favored source over a bureaucratic rival is a special form of proof. When these begin to pall, he resorts to the staggering generalization, as in:

> Americans demand law and order, at home and abroad. They also expect the people of other countries to govern themselves as Americans do; when they don't measure up, the reaction is to assume that they are not capable of the responsibility a democracy requires and therefore not worthy of the freedom it allows.

In Bonner's view, the United States got dictatorship in the Philippines because Washington wanted it, opting at almost every turn for Marcos's brand of authoritarianism over democracy (never really defined) and human rights (ditto). This, in turn, makes the U.S. responsible for poverty in the Philippines, for the "feudal" pattern of land ownership, and for the growing Communist insurgency. And if the Communists ever do take over, the United States will be responsible for that, too.

Washington, Bonner claims, never confronted Marcos properly:

> A dictator has to be convinced that the entire political relationship between his country and the United States is at stake; that if the repression doesn't stop, that if he doesn't open up his country to democracy, he is jeopardizing not just a few more trinkets but his country's good relations with Washington.

But Bonner's definition of a dictator is rather limited, and seems to exclude anyone claiming to rule on behalf of the proletariat. Marcos, he says, was "in the mold of a Somoza, a shah, a Park Chung Hee, a Diem." Once you have seen one of these dictators, apparently, you've seen them all.

When it comes to Communist parties in the Philippines, by contrast, Bonner is a man of exquisite nuance. Of the postwar Huk rebel-

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lion, he writes: "What Washington was seeking to crush was a peasant guerrilla army known as the Huks, born of the union of the Communist and Socialist parties in order to deal with legitimate grievances. . . ." He can also say, apparently pokerfaced, that "The Philippine Communist party was founded . . . with the openly avowed goals of overthrowing the United States colonial government and replacing it with an independent Philippines patterned after the Soviet Union." Of the current, Communist-led New People's Army, he notes that it represents a "homegrown, indigenous revolution," even though NPA leaders "had studied Marx and Lenin and were devotees of Mao; some of the leaders had secretly been in China in 1967 and 1968. They also borrowed from the Vietnamese insurgency, the Sandinista triumph in Nicaragua, and the mistakes of the Salvadoran guerrillas." (Those mistakes, according to the Salvadoran guerrillas themselves, include calling for an all-out armed offensive against the government *too soon*.)

The essential similarity of all anti-Communist dictators, and the homespun quality of the Communist guerrilla movement (which "built schools, helped peasant farmers, dispensed justice"), are two important aspects of Bonner's main thesis: as often as not, the best method for the U.S. to foster its foreign-policy goals is to attack its own authoritarian allies frontally. If this sounds like a replay of the famed human-rights debate that polarized thinking in the Carter and early Reagan administrations, it is—except that Bonner feels the Carter administration sold out completely in its toleration of the Marcos regime.

The illustration of that charge is another major axis of Bonner's book. In the manner of David Halberstam's *The Best and the Brightest*, Bonner personalizes the issue through two antagonists, Richard Holbrooke, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian Affairs in the Carter administration, and Patricia Derian, Carter's outspoken Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights. Bonner—surprise—comes down heavily on Derian's side in the conflict between the two officials. Holbrooke is excoriated for giving a higher priority to an agreement with Marcos over the disposition of U.S. military bases in the Philippines than to human-rights considerations. Derian, on the other hand, can do little wrong in Bonner's eyes, though to a less partisan observer she might well appear to be notable for other personal qualities. (After a meeting with then-Vice President Walter Mondale, in which she failed to persuade him to call off a ceremonial visit to the Philippines, Derian reminisced: "It was as unpleasant and disgusting a meeting as I have ever had with a U.S. government official. I came away with no respect at all for Mondale.")

One might think that Bonner's opinion of U.S. perfidy would change when his tale arrives at the climactic events of 1985 and 1986, the assassination of Mrs. Aquino's husband Benigno, the subsequent mass mobilizations of aggrieved middle-class Filipinos, the fraudulent elections viewed so vividly on American television, the final tilt of Washington toward Marcos's ouster. But no. As Bonner sees it, most of the progressive U.S. maneuvering in that period was the work of lower-rung professional officials often bucking the White House (to give Bonner credit, he exhaustively highlights those officials and their accomplishments). The Reagan administration remains forever behind the learning curve.

WHAT is missing from Bonner's book, aside from a sense of balance and judiciousness in presenting his evidence? Most saliently, any real feeling for the Philippines, and a level gaze at the Marcoses, who are, after all, the occasion for his diatribe. Although Bonner is detailed to a fault on the gaudy extravagance and greed of Imelda, and the heavy-handed wooing of U.S. policy-makers, he seems to have little or no clue at all to the sources of Marcos's political influence, what constituencies he cultivated, how factions were played off against one another—and how it came about that all of Marcos's fabled political savvy could have toppled into the disaster of the Aquino murder. Nor

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does Bonner seem to know or care much about the complexities of government facing Marcos's successor.

The customs and conventions of Philippine society, which might have a significant role to play in the Marcos drama, also seem to elude Bonner. He notes, as others have done, the dominant role of *utang na loob*, the reciprocal code of personal obligations that binds Filipino society together. Almost of itself, this code is bound to create power relationships that a Western observer might judge to be cronyism, a charge frequently and accurately leveled against Marcos. How did that affect the Philippines under Marcos, and how will it affect the future? Can cronyism be avoided in such a culture—especially on the Left, where trading in state power and patronage usually replaces trade in private favors and property? No one appears to have leaked any answers to Bonner.

SPELUNKING through the U.S. foreign-policy bureaucracy in search of a one-note answer to world problems, Bonner is, above all, unaware of the fundamental challenge of foreign policy itself, which involves the balancing of one interest against another. Probably nowhere in the world is this problem more complicated than here in this country, where so many of the interests to be balanced are internal, functions of a constitutionally mandated division of powers. As we are all too painfully aware, the same constraints severely limit the number of issues that a policy-making establishment can consider a top priority at any given time. One cause of Bonner's outrage is his inability to understand how, from 1972 to 1985, the Vietnam war, Watergate, Iran and the hostages (part I), Afghanistan, the Middle East, Central America, and a few other things might have affected our vigilance of the situation in the Philippines. In this, at least, Bonner still thinks like a true single-issue advocate.

At one point in his fulmination, Bonner notes that "it is difficult for Americans to accept that they don't always know what is best for the rest of the world." Admiring the thought, one is driven to wonder: did Bonner remember, when he was writing it, that he too was an American?

Wealth and Worship

"WITH ALL YOUR POSSESSIONS": JEWISH ETHICS AND ECONOMIC LIFE. By MEIR TAMARI. *Free Press. 340 pp. $22.50.*

Reviewed by ERICH ISAAC

THE role played by religion in the development of economic systems has been a subject of respectable scholarly investigation since the time of Max Weber and R.H. Tawney. But thoughtful and searching as some of the studies in this area have been, the specific role played by Jews and Judaism in the development of modern capitalism has by and large been viewed through distorted and polemical lenses, Marxist or simply anti-Semitic.

For Karl Marx, the hated spirit of Judaism and the hated spirit of capitalism were intertwined. For Werner Sombart, the German political economist and author of the influential work, *The Jews and Modern Capitalism* (1913), what was central was the role of Puritanism—this he borrowed from Weber—but "the dominating ideas of Puritanism which were so powerful in capitalism were more perfectly developed in Judaism." Capitalism, according to Sombart, in its demand for rationality and its insidious tendency to weaken "the blood-based" loyalties of the natural community, was a quintessentially Jewish "achievement." (Sombart's partiality to the natural community was eventually to lead him to National Socialism.)

Currently the most fashionable linkage, especially in the Third World, joins Judaism (or Zionism, or Israel), capitalism, and imperialism. This goes back to J.A. Hobson, who wrote in *Imperialism* (1902) of certain well-organized business interests "united by the

ERICH ISAAC *is professor of geography at the City College of the City University of New York.*

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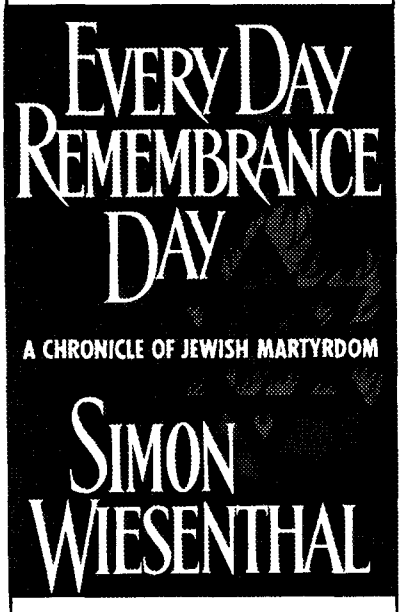

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strongest bonds of organization . . . controlled, so far as Europe is concerned, chiefly by men of a single and peculiar race . . . in a unique position to manipulate the policy of nations." According to Hobson these men designed imperialist adventures so as to provide profitable investment for their surplus capital, which in turn was created by the forced underconsumption of the exploited masses at home. These ideas, somewhat recast by Lenin and a host of Communists, Marxists, and socialists (including National Socialists), provided the vehicle whereby anti-Jewish/anti-Israel attitudes were subsequently internalized by Third World political leaders and intellectuals.

What all the views concerning the relationship of Jews and Judaism to the Western market economy have in common is ignorance of Jewish teaching on economic issues. This is true in equal measure of writers hostile to capitalism and/or the Jews and of those more favorably disposed. And it is historically true even of many Jewish socialists, Zionist and other varieties, who denied any intrinsic connection between Judaism and capitalism, defining Judaism rather as a kind of *Ursozialismus.*

Meir Tamari's book thus fills an important gap. And while it is not specifically written to respond to Sombart *et al.*, henceforth anyone wishing to theorize about the relation of Judaism to capitalism will have to temper speculation with the concrete evidence Tamari presents concerning Jewish economic values and the way they have shaped Jewish behavior. Certainly Tamari's book lends support neither to those who see in Jews the original bearers of the Puritan ethic, and in Judaism the springboard of a free-market economy, nor to those who regard Judaism as a warrant for utopian socialism.

Tamari, who is chief economist at the office of the governor of the Bank of Israel, sets out to document "how economic activity was traditionally guided and determined by the teachings of Judaism and its religious law" (Halakhah). The book offers a succinct overview of the varied sources of that law: the Bible and talmudic codes, communal enactments, ethical writings, and the extensive literature of responsa (rabbinic replies to queries on matters covered by the Halakhah). The legal and homiletic/ethical materials are grouped under such familiar chapter headings as "Money, Banking, and Interest," "Wages and Labor," "Competition, Prices, and Profits," "Taxation," and "Welfare." Tamari also presents pertinent excerpts from Jewish religious thinkers regarding the nature of economic life.

WHAT Tamari shows, in brief, is that, unlike Christianity, Judaism never developed an anti-commercial tradition. The rabbis approved of profitable entrepreneurial activity, and had in their teachings nothing resembling Thomas Aquinas's condemnation of "the occupation of the merchant and all that surrounds it." Rather, their overarching theological concern was that economic pursuits provide the means for the pursuit of religious study and a life of piety. As the very title of this book suggests, in a phrase taken from the *Sh'ma* prayer, wealth too can be an avenue of worship.

Classical Judaism not only approved of the pursuit of wealth by proper and legal activity, especially when wealth facilitated the study of Torah, but regarded the earning of a livelihood *(parnassah)* as a divine command. Indeed, Tamari quotes a striking passage from 13th-century Spain, in which Rabbi Bachya ibn Pakuda calls gainful activity a form of *imitatio dei:* "Apart from the period of wandering in the desert . . . there has been no manna from heaven. This active participation of man in the creation of his own wealth is a sign of man's spiritual greatness. In this respect he is, as it were, an imitator of God." While the poor must be provided for, there is no "preferential option for the poor" in Judaism; rather, religious value attaches to economic activity that makes the world more productive and more hospitable to man. (At the same time, the *achievement* of wealth by proper activity is viewed less as the deserved outcome of individual effort than as a sign of divine blessing.)

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Tamari details the process by which the straightforward biblical prohibition aganst theft was developed by halakhic authorities into quite subtle trade restrictions. Not only is trade in stolen goods forbidden, but so is trade in goods that are commonly the objects of theft. The laws of theft are even extended to misrepresentation (*gneivat da'at*—"stealing another's mind"): thus, "one is forbidden to beautify the article being sold in order to create a false impression," to "paint old baskets to make them look new. . . ." By anchoring this prohibition in a related biblical commandment, "You shall not put a stumbling block in the path of the blind" (Leviticus 19:17), the Halakhah was able to expand its scope to include any transaction which might be physically or morally harmful to the client.

In the light of such rulings, it cannot be said that Judaism provides religious endorsement of the perfectly free market. Halakhic authorities have accepted and in fact often insisted upon practices restraining competition if such competition is harmful to the community or even a segment of it. Jewish law recognizes binding agreements reached by producers and merchants limiting competition, fixing prices, and determining the quantity of output (provided there is an arbitrator to represent the public interest). Jewish authorities have even forbidden other Jews from settling in a community when this would interfere with the livelihood of those already there (*herem hayishuv*).

This last-named ruling, which was applicable only in Christian Europe, not in Muslim society, underscores the degree to which Jewish communal authorities have historically acted subject to external constraints. In Christian Europe the kind of economic activity in which Jews were permitted to engage was of course sharply limited; enormous, even confiscatory, taxes were often imposed on them; and there was always the threat of expulsion. Under these circumstances rabbinical authorities could do little more than strive to maintain an ethical posture in the face of economic conditions dictated by others. Unfortunately it is not always clear from this book how and by what process of reasoning the halakhic decisions taken in such circumstances can be extended to the ethical dilemmas of business in a free contemporary society.

THAT Tamari is concerned with such dilemmas, however, is very evident. In fact, he tells us he conceived the idea for this book while teaching a course in corporate finance at Bar-Ilan University (an Orthodox institution). His desire to expound a specifically Jewish value system for today's businessman mirrors a widespread concern not just in Israel but throughout the West and especially in the United States where, in typical American fashion, ethics is itself becoming a big business. (The bulk of a recent $30-million gift to Harvard's business school will fund a program in business ethics.)

Tamari's book not only reflects this general interest in finding ways to reinforce values in the marketplace, but indeed seems influenced by what might be called Western fashions in ethical concern. For example, halakhic rulings, ordinances, and responsa are cited here whose conclusions accord with the current thinking of Western secular urban and regional planners, public-health authorities, and assorted regulatory bodies. There is even a chapter on "Environmental Issues and the Public Good."

This chapter certainly does point up the invidiousness of those environmentalists who have "discovered" in Jewish religious writings and beliefs the source for the alleged Western despoliation of the natural world. For example, the historian Lynn White, Jr. has claimed that the biblical doctrine of creation sets man over and above nature and amounts to a call for unrestrained growth; similarly, in the divine command to "subdue" the earth the environmental philosopher Ian McHarg has found

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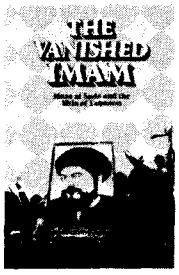

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"the appropriate injunction for the land rapist, the befouler of air and water, the uglifier and the gratified bulldozer." But all this, as Tamari shows, represents a total misunderstanding of biblical views. Environmentally destructive behavior is forbidden in the Bible, to the point that in time of war one is not allowed to destroy fruit trees (Deuteronomy 2:19) even if they belong to the enemy and the needs of war require it. (The reason is that the trees are a creation of God, Who through hem gives sustenance to man.)

If Tamari is perhaps overly anxious to show how "right-thinking" Jewish tradition has been in terms of currently fashionable concerns, one cannot help noticing that the ancient rabbis he cites evinced considerably more common sense than some of our appellate courts, which have demanded enforcement of pollution standards regardless of cost or even feasibility. Thus, Rabbi Shlomo Cohen in 16th-century Turkey, when confronted by demands that the dyeing industry in his community be shut down, ruled that although Jewish law forbids the location of polluting industries near residential settlements, ". . . since the textile industry is the main basis for the livelihood of the people of this town, it is incumbent on the neighbors to suffer the damage. . . ." Some of our judges might profitably reflect on the wisdom of this decision.

The Tax Reformers

SHOWDOWN AT GUCCI GULCH: LAWMAKERS, LOBBYISTS, AND THE UNLIKELY TRIUMPH OF TAX REFORM. By JEFFREY H. BIRNBAUM and ALAN S. MURRAY. *Random House. 309 pp. $18.95.*

Reviewed by RICHARD BROOKHISER

Showdown at Gucci Gulch is an account of the passage of the Tax Reform Act of 1986, told by two young reporters in the Washington bureau of the *Wall Street Journal* who covered the story for nearly three years as it was unfolding. The book thus belongs to the genre of the bedtime story for Washingtonians—although, given the role Washington plays in our lives, it is important reading for normal Americans as well.

True to their Washington focus, Birnbaum and Murray begin their story of tax reform with its first legislative incarnation—the Fair Tax Act of 1982, sponsored by two liberal Democrats, Senator Bill Bradley and Representative Richard Gephardt. The theory behind this proposal was simple. When there are many deductions and other special tax breaks, the tax base effectively dwindles; thus, in order to raise sufficient revenue, the rates must be set high. If, on the other hand, the number of deductions is diminished, the base expands and rates can be lowered correspondingly. Now, the Reagan administration had cut the top rate for individuals from 70 to 50 percent. The Bradley-Gephardt bill, after scaling back such deductions as depreciation, capital gains, and mortgage interest, cut the top rate to 30 percent. (Gephardt, on Birnbaum and Murray's showing, turned out to be only a "fair-weather friend" of his own initiative; when the trade deficit became an issue, he threw his energy into pushing for protectionism. Bradley, by contrast, was a good soldier for four long years.)

This activity among liberal Democrats drew a response from conservative Republicans. In the summer of 1983, the leading lights of the supply-side school of political economy held a meeting in Congressman Jack Kemp's backyard. Irving Kristol suggested that the supply-siders simply range themselves behind the Bradley-Gephardt idea. Lewis Lehrman, who had just run a spirited but unsuccessful race against Mario Cuomo for the governorship of New York, insisted that for political reasons the supply-siders needed their own proposal. Lehrman prevailed, and in the spring of 1984, Kemp and Senator Robert Kasten co-sponsored a bill of their own.

Beginning in 1984, and continuing through the spring of 1985, the Treasury Department, at the prompting first of Donald Regan, then of James Baker, produced two more tax-reform plans. Regan's, known as "Treasury I," was "an academician's tax system, elegant and clean," in which deductions fell like bowling pins. ("We've already stuck it to the blind, elderly, and crippled," one Treasury planner joked when tax-free allowances for ministers' housing came up for discussion, "we might as well get the preachers too.") When Baker took over the department at the start of Reagan's second term, he made the Treasury plan, now known as the President's, politically more acceptable by restoring many of the abandoned deductions.

The Republicans had acted out of fear that the Democrats might steal the issue. But now Dan Rostenkowski, the Democratic chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, felt compelled to show that House Democrats were as reform-minded as the Reagan administration, and a House bill was finished in December 1985. The Senate, in turn, had to keep pace with its rivals in the House. The Finance Committee, chaired by Robert Packwood, constructed its own version of a reform plan, and passed it unanimously in May 1986. The House and Senate ironed out their differences over the summer, and the Tax Reform Act of 1986—with a top individual rate of 28 percent—became law in October.

BIRNBAUM and Murray emphasize that of all the key players in this process, only Bradley and the supply-siders had a genuine intellectual interest in the issue. Regan, they write, "had no firm economic or political philosophy, outside of a businessman's basic conservatism. He was not introspective, not given to theorizing, and never worried much about the consistency of his positions." Baker "was a master at dealing with people and at orchestrating compromises. But he had little time for, or interest in, complex issues of government policy." Rostenkowski was a Chicago machine politician—in his pocket he

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still carried Richard Daley's money clip, given him by the mayor's widow—who spoke in mangled clichés. Packwood was an eccentric liberal Republican best known for his support of Israel and of abortion; where taxes were concerned, he was a defender of the status quo. ("I sort of like the tax code the way it is," he commented after the unveiling of Treasury I.)

These practical pols, Birnbaum and Murray argue, were simply swept along by an idea whose time had come. Tax reform had always failed in the past because the beneficiaries of the old system were strongly motivated to preserve it—the "Gucci Gulch" of the title refers to the gauntlet of well-shod lobbyists which forms in the halls whenever a congressional tax committee meets. But popular disgust with the system's inequities had reached a critical stage. Thus, politicians "may not have wanted reform, but they were not about to be seen standing in its way either."

As for why the public became fed up when it did, this is not exactly clear, but Birnbaum and Murray give credit to Ronald Reagan. "The President seldom took an active role in the two-year tax debate," but "without his backing, tax reform could never have happened. . . . When he put his full weight and power behind an idea that tapped such a fundamental frustration of the American people, others in Washington could hardly ignore it."

WHAT is missing from this account? Plenty, when one stops to think about it. Washington likes to see itself, if not at the center of national life, then certainly at the center of political life. But neither perception is true, and the Washington-only focus of this book makes the authors' story politically incomprehensible. Ronald Reagan's support for tax reform is plucked out of the context of his career, while his career is plucked out of the context of the tax revolt of the 1970's.

Reagan's last major act as Governor of California was a fight for Proposition 1, a tax-limitation amendment to the state constitution. Its failure made inevitable the far more draconian Proposition 13 of 1978, which sparked a wave of successful state tax-cutting referendums across the country, even in liberal Massachusetts. (Birnbaum and Murray mention Proposition 13 once, in their epilogue.) At the same time, the supply-siders were making the case for federal tax-rate cuts. Bradley's opponent in his first run for the Senate was Jeffrey Bell, an early supply-side true believer. Birnbaum and Murray note the fact, but deny that Bell's arguments had any effect on his opponent; Bradley, they claim, was already thinking of a broad-based, low-rate tax. If so, however, he kept it to himself.

Only by ignoring this crescendo of anti-tax activity can the authors preserve a second Washington assumption: that tax reform was a trans-ideological issue, a happy fusion of opposites. Naderite groups like Citizens for Tax Justice, Birnbaum and Murray note, had been harping on corporate tax breaks for years. But why, then, had their efforts been so unsuccessful until the right-wing tax revolt came along? Birnbaum and Murray quote, without fully understanding, a warning that Republican pollster Richard Wirthlin gave Baker early in 1984: "The public would be skeptical of any effort to 'reform' the tax system and would probably view it as a tax increase in disguise." The public would have been right. Liberals are interested in spreading out the tax burden more evenly, but they are more interested in funding the programs they endorse. The average voter knows this. A tax-reform crusade composed of liberals would have gotten as far as Walter Mondale.

Birnbaum and Murray saddle themselves with a final Washington assumption: that tax reform has to be "revenue neutral." Lawmakers could juggle rates and deductions as much as they liked, but the amount of money they would

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collect had to be the same as whatever had been raised under the old system. All the competing proposals and plans, except Kemp-Kasten, sought to reach this goal. But was it even possible? If a nation's economic activity is a static quantity, then the revenues it generates can probably be rearranged as easily as building blocks. But if it is an ever-changing flow of effort and energy, how can such rigid calculations be made?

In practice, principles like "revenue neutrality" put politicians at the mercy of economic forecasters —with often comic results. At several points in this story, the major actors are seen sweating and straining to come up with some workable scheme, only to be told at the last minute that, due to new projections, or simple error, they are still several billion dollars short. The only one ever to lose his temper was Packwood, who, after one $17-billion surprise, criticized his forecasters on television. Birnbaum and Murray scold this loss of temper as "cruel and mindless." I sympathize with Packwood. But even he, after his outburst, obediently returned to his labors. Thus do economists make cowards of us all.

If Birnbaum and Murray had looked around some of their assumptions, their book might have lost some of its single-minded concentration and energy, but it would have been richer for the effort.

Blaming Israel

SANDS OF SORROW. By MILTON VIORST. *Harper & Row. 328 pp. $19.95.*

Reviewed by DAVID BAR-ILLAN

MILTON VIORST, a journalist and one of a number of former liberal supporters of Israel who in recent years have turned on the Jewish state and now regularly excoriate its policies, sets out to prove that the fault (dear Brutus) lies not in the twists of contemporary liberal politics but in the metamorphosis of Israel itself. To that end he reconstructs history as a morality play: the sorry story of how Israel—as the current cliché has it—"lost its soul," or, more accurately, sold it to the devil of militarism, expansionism, and oppression.

In the beginning (so runs the indictment) Zionism was good. It was in the hands of "mainstream Zionists," Ashkenazi Jews with "ideas of democracy, secularism, and socialism." But lurking in ambush were Vladimir Jabotinsky, "contemptuous of socialism," and his band of Revisionists, who, "scoffing at democracy, adopted much of fascism's style and doctrine." After Jabotinsky's death, the Revisionists, now led by Menachem Begin, set out to undermine the democratic and liberal values of the "mainstream," a pursuit which gained considerable momentum with the arrival in Israel of the Sephardi Jews from around the Mediterranean who, "despite centuries of relative tranquility in the Arab world," came to the Jewish state with an inordinate hatred of Arabs.

Shaped by "the Islamic tradition of patriarchal rule and the Koranic view," these violence-prone Sephardim, in Viorst's recounting, looked upon the Western ways of "mainstream" Israel and, saying unto themselves," why democracy?," joined Begin's mobs. After 1967 they found allies in yet another anti-democratic force—the Orthodox—who, discerning the hand of God in Israel's victory in the Six-Day War, switched from pious detachment to active participation in politics.

With such forces in tow, Begin's powers became awesome indeed. While still in opposition, he and his followers ("violent Likud mobs") had brought the country to "near revolt" and to the "edge of civil war." The state "seemed to totter." As early as the 50's they had pressured General Moshe Dayan to launch a "massive retaliation" policy against Arab terrorism and caused David Ben-Gurion to reject Egyptian President Nasser's "peace overtures" and thus precipitate the 1956 Suez war. In the 60's and 70's Begin corrupted Golda Meir, converted Yitzhak Rabin from a socialist to a militarist who put "his trust in arms," and even succeeded in influencing the peaceable Abba Eban. Once in power in 1977, he made Egypt's Sadat "betray peace," caused President Carter to "fail in the quest for a comprehensive peace," and sanctioned "violence throughout Israeli society."

EVEN leaving aside the outright falsifications and distortions of historical fact in this narrative reconstruction, too numerous and too pervasive to rebut in detail, a visitor from Mars might be forgiven for wondering what country and which leader Viorst is describing. Can this violent place be Israel, whose homicide rate per capita—including all terrorist acts—is less than one-fifteenth that of any major American city? Where 80-90 percent of the Jewish and Arab electorate vote with monotonous regularity in exemplary, peaceful elections? Where the most disorderly incident in the last, and historically most contentious, election involved a woman, not immediately identified as a Begin follower, who insisted on voting bare-breasted? Could Viorst's Begin be the same ineffectual, meticulously loyal opposition leader who for almost thirty years could not win an election? Who, once elected, was forever dependent on precarious coalitions? Who enticed Sadat to come to Jerusalem by promising in advance to surrender the whole of Sinai? Who conceded the "legitimate rights of the Palestinian people," offered Arab autonomy within the borders of Israel, and abandoned sixteen towns for a peace treaty with Egypt? Who repeatedly succumbed to American pressure before and during the Lebanon war? Who resigned from office rather than face the antiwar vigil outside his home?

Viorst's post-1967 Arab world is even less recognizable. According to his scenario, while Israel has pursued its devious, war-mongering ways, the Arabs have sought nothing but peace, self-determination for the Palestinians, and recognition for the PLO. Israel's call for peace talks in which "everything is negotiable" immediately following the 1967 war—an unprecedented instance of the victor suing for peace—is derided by Viorst as dis-

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ingenuous and false. The Arab response, the "three nos" of Khartoum (no peace, no recognition, no negotiation), is hailed by him as a monumental breakthrough because it did not specifically call for "destroying Israel itself." (Actually it did, by stating the need to recover "all occupied Arab territory"—not just territories lost in 1967—a clear reference to all of Palestine.) The incessant terrorist war against Israel, sponsored by states whose combined military might approaches NATO's, is explained away by this author as the last resort of the weak against the powerful. The Yom Kippur War launched by Egypt and Syria, which succeeded in overrunning Israel's lines of defense and nearly swept to victory, is described as a limited-objective exercise, not threatening to "Israel itself or to the people." And as for the 1982 war in Lebanon, Viorst describes it as an unprovoked Israeli invasion launched despite the PLO's faithful adherence to a year-long cease-fire (during which, as it happens, the PLO made over 150 incursions into Israel, albeit not across the Lebanese border, killing 26 Israelis and injuring 264).

America's role in all this, according to Viorst, has been to provide a rubber stamp for Israel's actions. A series of understandings between Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and then-Premier Yitzhak Rabin, culminating in the Sinai II agreement of September 1975, "all but exclud[ed] American judgment from Middle East issues. [Sinai II] attached Washington's endorsement to almost any military action an Israeli government might choose to take, while it bound the U.S. to pick up the costs. . . ." This may come as a surprise to anyone who remembers the almost fatal delay in resupplying Israel during the 1973 war; Israel's desperate isolation during the Ford-Kissinger "reassessment" and the decade-long oil crisis; Israel's lack of success in stopping massive U.S. sales of arms to Egypt before Camp David and to the Saudis after; the sanctions on Israel for bombing the Iraqi reactor and the PLO infrastructure in Beirut in 1981; and, above all, the two rescues of the PLO by the Reagan administration during the Lebanon war. Clearly, the Zionist-tail-wagging-the-American-dog canard brooks no interference from facts.

Unlike Israel and the U.S., Viorst's Syria is a model of trustworthiness and responsibility. Such minor transgressions as Syria's invasion of Israel in 1973; Syria's abrogation of an agreement with the U.S. and Saudi Arabia to evacuate Lebanon in return for an American-engineered cease-fire in 1982; Syria's direct involvement in the most heinous acts of international terrorism—most recently the attempt to plant a bomb on an El Al plane in London and the massacre of worshippers in Istanbul—bother him not a bit.

Nor is he bothered by the PLO charter, which calls for the destruction of Israel and is never mentioned in the book, or by any incident which may impugn PLO credibility, such as the insistence of its "foreign minister" that Mrs. Leon Klinghoffer, rather than the PLO terrorists on the *Achille Lauro*, killed her husband and tossed him into the sea.

As all this suggests, Viorst is very much at home with such staples of argument as the double standard and the false symmetry; his book as a whole offers countless instances of both. Thus, to reinforce the image of Jewish settlers in the administered territories as fanatics, Viorst falsely avers that the late Rabbi Kook, the spiritual leader of some of them, advocated an *Arab-enrein* Israel and a "Jewish jihad." Viorst does not mention that Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Kuwait, and Iraq are already *Judenrein*, and that the handful of Jews in Syria live in fear for their lives. Crudely and baselessly, he states that "Begin expected Arab penance for Nazi sins." He does not mention that Arafat's spiritual mentor, the Mufti of Jerusalem, was a confidant and collaborator of Hitler's. To establish a moral equivalence between Israel and Syria he refers to "hawks on both sides." One wonders where the Syrian doves have been hiding, or if the press has failed to report massive peace demonstrations in Syria and other Arab lands. He accuses Begin of "not considering any compromise of Israel's claim to the West Bank"—the Camp David accords belie that—and interprets Begin's attachment to Judea and Samaria as a cynical preference for territories over peace. But Sadat's insistence on every inch of the Sinai seems to Viorst not only understandable but admirable, and likewise Sadat's refusal to forfeit the war option in the event of hostilities between Israel and other Arab

"AIRLINE DEREGULATION is blamed for things that are no less regulated than they ever were, such as aircraft safety and air-traffic control. The only problem that can really be pinned on deregulation is that airfares dropped so much that ordinary folks could finally afford to travel. It is surely true that restoring high airfares would reduce the traffic, but that is like proposing a huge tax on cars so that limousines would face fewer tie-ups."

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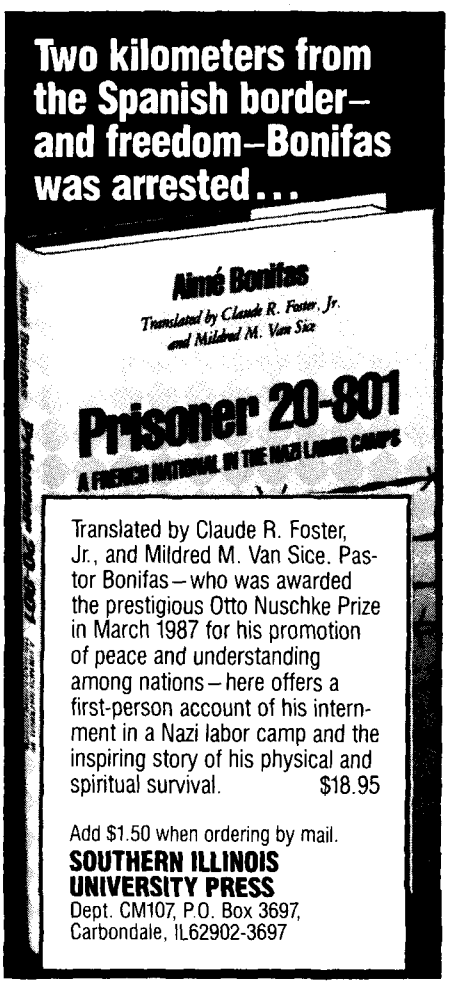
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countries. In describing the importance of Jerusalem to both Islam and Judaism Viorst writes, "Arabs feel the same attachment to the Dome of the Rock that the Jews feel for the Wailing Wall." The sight of Arabs praying on the Temple Mount, heads bowed toward Mecca and backs to the Dome, tells a different story.

IN PROPOSING a solution to the conflict, Viorst pays lip-service to "territorial compromise," but it is clear he believes Israel's very existence, within the 1949 borders, to be itself a territorial compromise on the part of the Arabs. Needless to say, he never entertains the idea that the Arabs, who possess land almost twice the size of the U.S. and who, even by his count, have launched three wars of aggression against Israel, should relinquish *their* claim to a barren area of 2,000 square miles for the sake of peace.

What he really proposes is not a territorial compromise but "territories for peace": total Israeli withdrawal to the 1949 armistice lines and a PLO state in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza with parts of Jerusalem, but not with Jerusalem as capital. (How he means to prevent a sovereign state from designating its own capital is not explained.) Like all formulas in which peace is the only *sine qua non*, however, "territories for peace" is extortionate. As long as there is more territorial ransom available, there will be no reason to stop. Western Galilee, for example, an area outside the United Nations' 1947 partition plan and gained by force in Israel's War of Independence, is vulnerable to arguments now made about Judea and Samaria. Even the demographic consideration applies to Western Galilee, for there too the Arabs constitute a majority. And, indeed, the Soviets as well as some Arab leaders are already intoning that only the borders of the original partition plan will bring permanent peace.

Viorst concedes that a PLO state could not absorb the Palestinian refugees, and would have to be demilitarized. But only the hopelessly pollyannish can expect countries that consistently rejected Palestinian refugees when they were stateless to accept them when they become citizens of a new state; and only the hopelessly gullible can believe that if Arafat truly agreed to a demilitarized ministate he would not be branded a traitor by Qaddafi, Habash, Jibril, Hawatmeh, Abu Musa, Abu Nidal, and other terrorist chieftains, and meet the fate of King Abdullah, Sadat, Bashir Gemayel, Sartawi, Al Masri, and thousands of others, big and small, who have been assassinated for advocating coexistence with Israel. The only *certain* result of a Viorst solution would be the ensconcing of irredentist terrorists within katyusha range of downtown Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.

IF IT IS impossible to take *Sands of Sorrow* seriously as a work of analysis—it is, rather, an *Arabian Nights* fairy tale masquerading as history, capped with solutions that even by journalistic standards are superficial and half-baked—the book does retain a certain significance as a bellwether of at least one segment of contemporary liberal opinion. In the manner of anti-defense activists everywhere in the West, and oblivious to every bitter lesson of the 20th century, Milton Viorst locates the source of a conflict between a democracy and a totalitarian aggressor in the alleged militarism of the democracy; to end the conflict, he recommends appeasement and unilateral concessions. Like the compulsion to negotiate with those who deny one's right to exist, this is the kind of convoluted thinking that would in the end probably benefit more from psychological than from political criticism.

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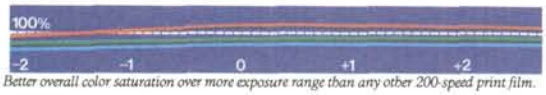

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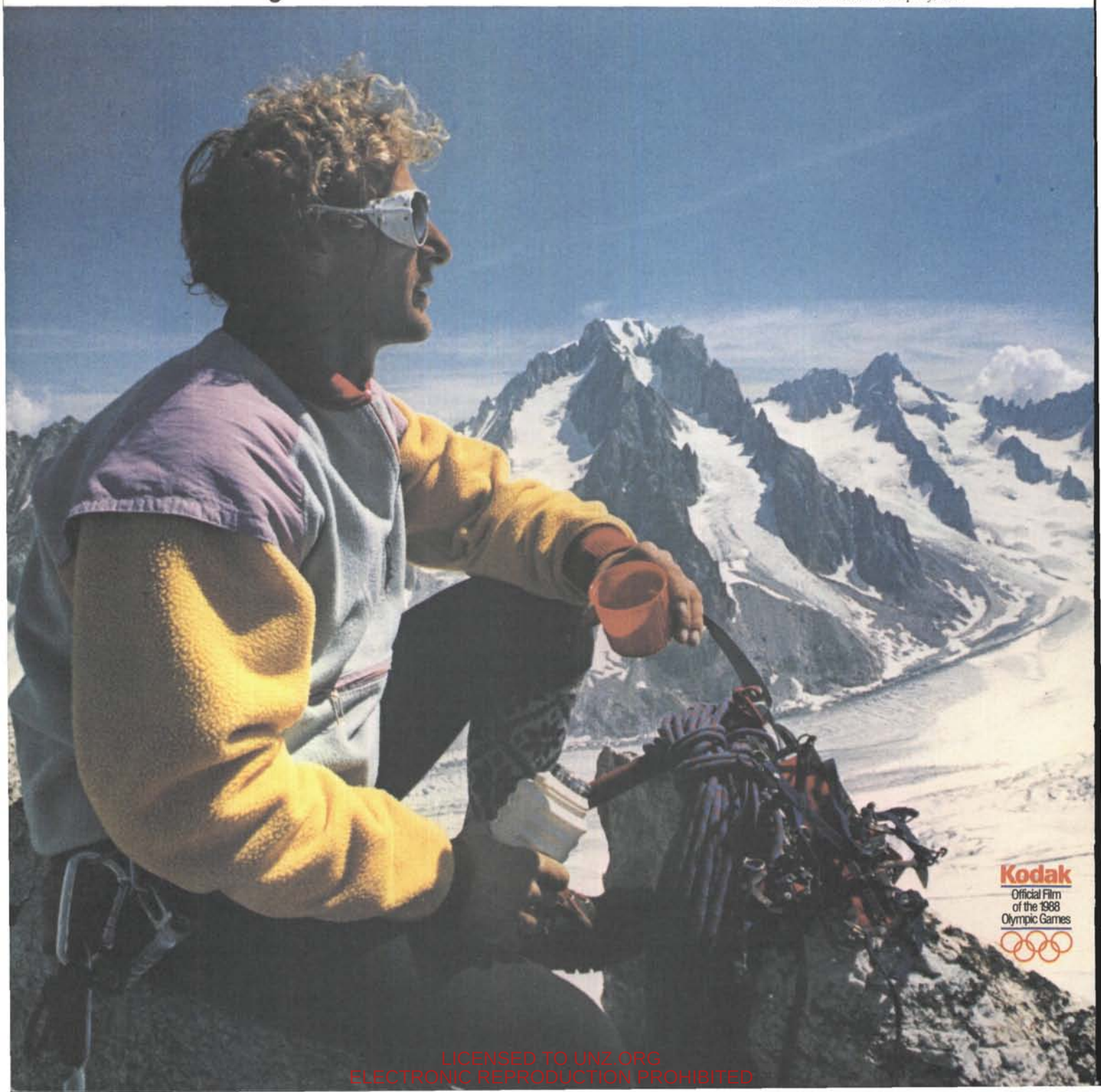

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